# Dr. Du Bois' 'Color and Democracy' Traces Path to Colonial Freedom

The Worker 6-10-45

**With the defeat of German Fascism, the colored and colonial question assumes decisive importance in the war against Japanese Fascism. Dr. Du Bois deals with this urgent problem in his new book reviewed by James W. Ford.**

**COLOR AND DEMOCRACY: Colonies and Peace**, by W. E. B. Du Bois. Harcourt, Brace and Company, $2.00.

*Reviewed by*
*JAMES W. FORD*
6-10-45

DR. DU BOIS raises here one of the most crucial questions of war and peace. The colonial question assumes decisive importance for the prosecution of the war against Japanese Fascism.

Dr. Du Bois devotes the first chapter of his book to the unofficial negotiations of the big powers at Dumbarton Oaks and he says that the guiding purpose of that conference was to stop war by organization of the most powerful nations on earth "with varying histories and ideals" against aggression. But, says Du Bois, "there sat at the Dumbarton Oaks, fears, jealousies, and hopes: fears of renewed German aggression and Asiatic revolt; fears of postwar poverty and despair; jealousies of national rights and imperial power and hopes for eventual peace and progress." Here also is the crux of the colonial question.

The representatives of imperial powers at Dumbarton Oaks should give serious consideration to the solution of the colonial problem. But they did not. And it was taken over into the San Francisco conference in a way that aroused the fears of colonial peoples. If the colonial peoples are not to hold to their fears of imperial policy then these big imperial powers should prove in practice that the basis for these fears are to be removed.

The experiences of the past cannot be easily removed from the consciousness of colonial peoples. "In the latter part of the nineteenth century," writes DuBois. "China was at the point of being definitely divided into a group of European colonies." Spheres of influence had been laid out by the great powers including the United States. Western imperialism tended to nudge Japan out of partnership in this enterprise. "When this imperialism," says Du Bois, "made common cause with dictatorship in Germany and Italy, the world war was inevitable." Here Du Bois places the question in the province of imperialistic policy and raises one of the main contradictions between imperialist states that has led inevitably to war, namely, rivalries for division of colonial countries and military aggression against their national movements. 6-10-45

### *Tory Policy*

With the defeat of German fascism in Europe, the war against the Japanese Fascists in the Far East comes head on with colonialism. And when Mr. Churchill clings to his tory policy of not relinquishing colonies; or when Dutch imperialism tenaciously holds on to hers; or when the discussion around trusteeship over colonies at San Francisco showed definite trends in the direction of big imperial powers holding on to domination over colonial peoples —then these people, understandably, do not find their enthusiasm for the war increased.

**"The majority of the inhabitants of the earth," says Du Bois, "who happen for the most part to be colored, must be regarded as having the right and the capacity to share in human progress and to become co-partners in that democracy which alone can ensure peace among men, by abolition of poverty, the education of the masses, protection from disease, and the scientific treatment of crime."**

**Independence and democracy for colonial people can be achieved in our time, providing we live up to the Moscow, Cairo, Teheran and Crimean agreements.**

America was once a colony. She achieved independence and arose to nationhood during the period of the revolution of the 18th century, the classical period of the rise of nations. But these nations that rose on the basis of the rise of capitalism, after completing their development as nations, began to oppress other nations. And it seemed, until and with the advent of fascism that backward peoples and colonial countries would never be permitted to take the path to full nationhood.

But now German fascism, the spearhead of imperialistic destructions of nations, has itself been destroyed. Japanese Fascism is next on the order of the day, and providing we defeat this fascism as decisively and with the same object in view and root fascism out of the world, colonial peoples can take the path of independence and national existence.

Foreign Minister Molotoff made this point perfectly clear at San Francisco when he introduced an amendment to the discussion on trusteeship calling for independence for colonies. He added that he would be pleased to see India independent now.

DuBois points out the disadvantages which have been the lot of colonial peoples under imperialism. And he adds that limited cultural advances hold the hope for further adjustments because **"the world believes in democracy, and is fighting a war of incredible cost to establish democracy."**

**The basis for the world travelling the path to full freedom and independence for colonies lies** in two directions, viz., 1) by Britain and America where capitalist relations exist, reaching agreement with the Socialist system where nations have achieved liberty and freedom so that they can get along together in the world, and 2) by adjusting the points of conflict between them and the colonial peoples so as to eliminate features of colonial oppression which are inherent in fascism and in the old imperialist policy.

6-10-45

### *Potent Factor*

The most notable chapter in Du Bois's book is the one where he shows the Soviet Union to be a potent factor in solving the problems of peace and the advancement of common people. "There is no doubt," says Du Bois, "that thinking and working people see in Russia the greatest hope of the future."

"From a land noted for its fierce and brutal anti-Semitism and for other racial antagonisms and tensions," he adds, "it has become today a community of two hundred, more or less, adverse groups of people speaking different languages, with different heredity and to some extent clashing ideals, bound together in an extraordinary unity of effort and enthusiasm for its ideal."

If Soviet Russia has solved the problems of nationalities, Britain and America although they have an entirely different ideology than the Soviet Union can grant, through the further unfoldment of bourgeois democracy which was the basis of the foundation of these states as nations, the right of self-determination to colonies, which is a democratic right.

### *Grand Alliance*

6-10-45

The Crimean conference, which further consolidated the grand alliance of the three Allied, powers, is the basis for this perspective. Dumbarton Oaks, says Du Bois, is the latest endeavor in the government of mankind from the "Double Crown of Egypt, the Achean league, the Holy Alliance and the League of Nations" to the world organization of the United Nations in 1945.

This grand alliance can go down in history as a memorable milestone in the road to ensuring world peace and security, providing it takes the path also of independence, cultural and economic advancement of colonial peoples and countries.

Does this mean that imperialism no longer exists? Of course not. But the coalition that was formed at Yalta has proved that nations and peoples with different ideologies and high and low degrees of social and economic development possess the will and the ability to remove differences of opinion and adjust their relations with undeveloped countries so as to settle questions in the spirit of mutual understanding and concerted action to advance civilization. This can be done, however, only if the democratic forces combat those forces who are trying to frustrate the world organization and who are trying to alter the Crimean decisions in the direction of imperialist policy.

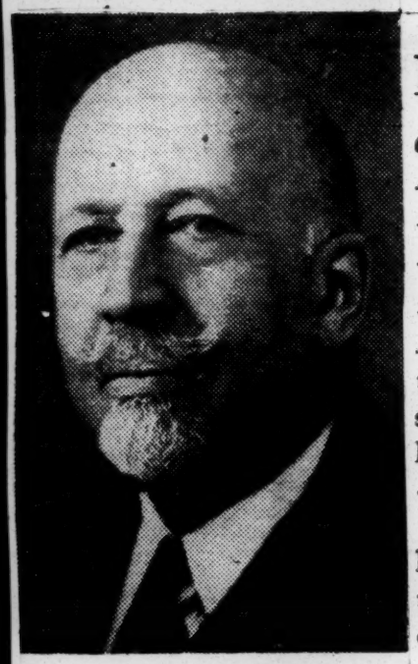
Dr. Du Bois has done a masterly job. He has made an important political contribution to the thought of our time. His book is divided into seven chapters, viz., 1. Dumbarton Oaks, 2. The Disfranchised Colonies, 3. The Unfree People, 4. Democracy and Color, 5. Peace and colonies, 6. The Riddle of Russia, 7. Missions and Mandates. 6-10-45

In chapter 4 he discusses the effect which the disfranchisement and oppression of the American Negro play in this world picture. Du Bois is eminently qualified by experience and understanding as well as being a recognized spokesman of colored people to make his contribution to a solution of the world problem of colonies.

From whence flows this understanding? DuBois does not profess to being a Marxist and there is much that could be added to give a rounded out Marxist interpretation of the facts he has adduced to the discussion. What is inherent in Du-Bois' contribution is the struggles and position of the Negro people as an oppressed group in the very center of the greatest capitalist country in the world. It flows from the fact that the Negro workers have become an inseparable part of the labor movement in America and that they have brought into the Negro peoples movement as a whole the methods and basic current of the labor movement in world affairs.

Of all oppressed peoples of comparable size, the Negro people speak and think in the language spoken by the largest combination of peoples who have developed modern industrialism. All the advanced thought of the world is made available to them in the English language. Through their leaders, and first of all of labor leaders, and through their struggles they are playing a role which not only affects their own position here in America, but they are contributing to the solutions of the problems of colored and colonial peoples throughout the world— and also therefore to the world problem of peace and progress.

India workers produce weapons in the war against Japan.



W. E. B. DuBOIS

# Democracy—for Whom?

*Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace, by W. E. B. DuBois. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 143 pages. $2.*

FOR MORE THAN a quarter of a century, W. E. B. DuBois has been fighting the cause of the colonial peoples. Always he has fought against odds; sometimes he has had to fight alone. He has faced inertia, prejudice, misunderstanding. But he has never given over. Rather his vision has been sharpened and his perceptions deepened by the constant frustrations that have been put in his way.

All this is apparent in the discussion of the colonial problem in relation to world democracy and future world peace that now comes from his pen. Out of the sensitivity of his own endowment and the richness of his experience, he has written of the dangers that lie ahead if we fail to heed the unrest of the tens of millions who have no outlet for their aspirations, and who, in the world parliament, will have no voice of their own. The book itself was inspired by the failure of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference to include the problem in its deliberations. It has not lost its timeliness by reason of the San Francisco meeting, however, for the action taken there concerning what the language of diplomacy now delicately refers to as "dependent peoples" or "trusteeship areas" only underscores the points made in it.

DuBois lays the whole dismal problem before his reader with a stark realism that is badly needed in these days of decision. The economic drives that underlie the competition for colonies, the poverty of native peoples who live under foreign domination, the well meant, unilateral measures for ameliorating this situation, the prestige value of empire and the racist rationalizations that bolster the colonial system are all considered. The point of the book cannot be better made than by quoting the author:

> Today, as we try in anticipation to rebuild the world, the propositions of Dumbarton Oaks center their efforts upon stopping war by force and at the same time leaving untouched, save by vague implication, the causes of war, especially those causes which lurk in rivalry for power and prestige, race dominance, and income arising from the ownership of men, land and materials. So long as colonial imperialism exists there can be neither peace on earth nor good will toward men.

One aspect of the problem, almost universally ignored in current discussions of the future of empire, in itself is a contribution of the first order—that home governments will be so pressed to meet the costs of rehabilitation and various forms of socialized aid that the hands of even the most liberal regimes will be tied in any effort to give over colonial possessions. "The temptation to recoup and balance the financial burden of increased taxation by investment in colonies, where social services are at their lowest and standards of living below the requirements of civilization, is going to increase decidedly; and the disposition of parties on the Left, liberal parties, and philanthropy to press for colonial improvements will tend to be silenced by the bribe of vastly increased help by government to better conditions." This is something which, once pointed out, is self-evident; it is all the more reason for mobilizing sentiment in those countries where these considerations do not obtain, in order to preserve world peace by aiding colonial peoples as they press for ultimate freedom.

The book is wise in that it envisages the problem of the disenfranchised everywhere, correctly designating this problem as a primary source of future wars because of the discontent of these people. In this, the discussion will startle those who in this country think of colonialism as a system in which only other countries participate. For the Negro in our own South, DuBois points out again and again, is as much a part of this complex as is the South Sea islander or the Congo native. It is the presence of the Negro as a focus for discrimination that in so many instances causes us to nullify our democracy, and handicaps us in the same way as the colonial empires of England and Holland and France and Belgium handicap them in the struggle for world peace, by removing the moral initiative given by their democratic systems of government.

Perhaps because this country is not an imperialistic power of the conventional type, our people are only slightly aware of their stake in the solution of the colonial problem. Yet this problem, it cannot be stressed too often, is a world problem, if only in that it is one of the greatest obstacles to the attainment of world peace. This book, which, it is to be hoped, will attain wide circulation, should help bring us to a realization of our need to concern ourselves with colonial matters and our obligation to help resolve the difficulties they pose.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

NEW YORK, N. Y.
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JUN 4 - 1945

# The Book of the Day

## A Militant Approach to the Colonial Problem.

"There will be at least 750,000,000 colored and blackfolk inhabiting colonies owned by white nations, who will have no rights that the white people of the world are bound to respect. Revolt on their part can be put down by military force; they will have no right of appeal to the Council or the Assembly; they will have no standing before the International Court of Justice. Any dispute concerning their status is put beyond the jurisdiction of either the Council or the Assembly unless it threatens world war." That is from "Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace" (Harcourt, Brace. $2), by W. E. Burghardt DuBois, in which current efforts to insure peace "through the united action of men of good will," with special reference to the proposals advanced at the Dumbarton Oaks conference, are appraised by the leader of that school of Negro thought which favors a frontal approach to the challenge of the right to complete equality of opportunity.

Dr. DuBois's preface is dated January 1, 1945, when San Francisco was still some distance away. Two representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have kept within calling distance of the delegates, an Indian nationalist challenged the right of titled Indian delegates to speak for the Indian people, and a group of Canadian Indians whose aim was to interest the San Francisco conference in the Repeal of the Canadian Indian Act of 1927, had little hope of getting beyond the door. So whatever emerges or will emerge from San Francisco cannot alter either the force or weakness of Dr. DuBois's pleadings.

* * *

As for Dumbarton Oaks, Dr. DuBois, without discussing the advantages or disadvantages of modern imperialism, admits that vast numbers of backward peoples have made notable cultural advances under the colonial régime. But he insists that if the world believes in democracy, it is intolerable in ethics and dangerous to statecraft to allow, for instance, eight million Belgians to represent ten million Congolese in a new internation without giving the blacks any voice even to complain. By the same token, he insists it is unfair that nine million Dutchmen should be the sole arbiters of and spokesmen for 67,000,000 brown men of the South Seas. Nor can any philosophy of democracy find any way of reconciling the fact that 50,000,000 British Empire whites should be able to make the destiny of 450,000,000 yellow, brown and black people a matter solely of their own internal decision. He cites too, the Union of South Africa, a leading "free nation" fighting for "democracy," "where 2,000,000 whites, not only in international affairs but openly, in their established government, hold 8,000,000 black natives in a subordination unequaled elsewhere in the world." These are on his list of "disfranchised colonies."

* * *

Of the "unfree peoples," Dr. DuBois estimates, there are half a billion in nations and groups who are quasi-colonials and "in no sense" form free and independent states. This in addition to the 750,000,000 of disfranchised colonial peoples. He fears that China, today nominally recognized as among the leading nations, will not be allowed autonomy and will not be able to achieve freedom in our time. It must be assumed, says Dr. DuBois, that Great Britain, France and the United States will eye the wealth of China and her possibilities as a subject nation, and thus hold her in continued subjugation to the great industrial nations of the west.

Dr. DuBois's stand on the Negro problem is too well known to call for review here. There can hardly be any disputing his statement that "The awareness of Negroes of their second-rate citizenship can no longer be questioned." His final chapter dealing with the riddle of Russia will be read much more tolerantly today than it might have been in, say, 1941. But even some sympathetic readers may prefer to await the passing of time before accepting all the premises and promises of the Russian experiment. It appears obvious that Dr. DuBois has filled a larger order than perhaps he bargained for. He has certainly established a powerful case for the colored races. His challenge to post-war peace plans cannot be tossed aside with a mere nod.

JERRY RAND.

# The Colonial Problem

COLOR AND DEMOCRACY: Colonies and Peace. By W. E. Burghardt DuBois. 143 pp. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. $2

By WILLIAM EDWIN DIEZ

NEW YORK TIMES

THE discussion at San Francisco of international trusteeship for dependent peoples and strategic areas, the interest of the United States in these questions, and the qualifications of the author as a leader of the Negro race make this an arresting and timely book. For Mr. DuBois repeatedly and forcefully reminds his readers that failure to deal now with colonial problems belies a professed devotion to democracy and threatens the attainment and enjoyment of world peace. He makes clear also that the United States as a democracy and as the home of large Negro and other minorities bears a particular responsibility for the solution of these problems.

6-10-45

In brief, he contends that adequate provision has not yet been made for "the 750,000,000 colored and black folk inhabiting colonies owned by white nations, who will have no rights that the white people of the world are bound to respect." If this situation persists and nations continue to regard empires primarily as a source of profits, Mr. DuBois predicts revolts by colonial peoples and wars between colonial powers.

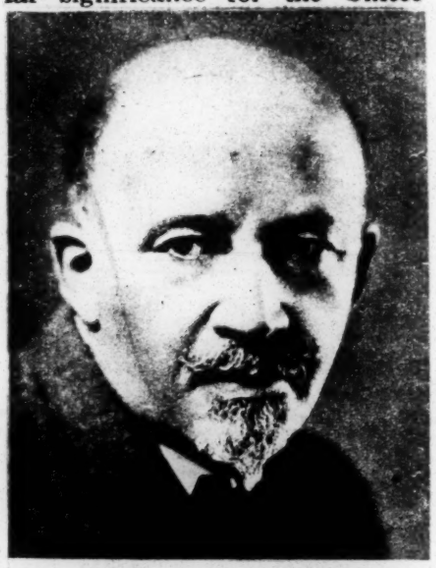
This appraisal represents the judgment of a man of broad education and experience, who has traveled in Africa and Asia and has written extensively on the Negro and his problems. Mr. DuBois is the director of special research for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and an associate to the consultant sent by that organization to assist the American delegation at San Francisco. He is also chairman of the Department of Sociology at Atlanta University, a former editor of The Crisis, and the founder of the Pan-African Congresses. Hence his views on the important subject of colonies command attention and are no less pertinent because the United States sponsored a trusteeship amendment to the Dumbarton Oaks plan before the book was published.

"COLOR AND DEMOCRACY" is a vigorously and boldly written demand for the reform of modern capitalism and the removal of racial discrimination in order that colonial peoples may put behind them their present status as hewers of wood and drawers of water. In giving a summary of how modern empires developed and a description of what they are like, the author does not mince words. Colonies he delineates as "slums," differing mainly from city slums by being racially, culturally and geographically removed from the country under whose authority they exist. Although he admits that colonial policy has become enlightened with the years, he contends that the efforts of colonial governments to improve the status of the native populations, while praiseworthy, have been in general too meager and too long delayed.

But it is not so much the shortcomings of government that concern Mr. DuBois as the power of wealth represented by industrial corporations and financial enterprises in dependent areas. The colonial system he characterizes as "a tremendous financial structure built upon the nineteenth-century conception of race inferiority." The author is admittedly moving in uncertain and not yet fully charted waters in discussing colonies as a source of investment. Viewed historically, however, and even up to the present day, one must agree with his contention that modern empires as a whole have offered opportunities for higher returns on capital than could ordinarily be found at home and have sometimes yielded enormous profits—and that wages and taxation are lower in colonial areas, where the investor escapes most of the burden of colonial improvements, which are paid for out of the public purse.

There can be no doubt that modern capitalism has indeed created a serious economic and political cleavage between colonial peoples and colonial powers. The role of responsible government everywhere must be to seal over this gap, but in Mr. DuBois' opinion not many countries are willing and able to do so. For by measuring sovereign independence by the yardsticks of industrial might, technological competence and financial power, he concludes that most nations are "unfree"—that is to say, they are prevented by their limited strength and by other considerations from pressing for colonial reform. Furthermore, a similar cleavage already exists inside many of these countries. Thus, he argues, the task of reform and restraint rests with the great powers themselves.

IN "Color and Democracy," one of the key chapters of the book, Mr. DuBois discusses the particular significance for the United



W. E. Burghardt DuBois.

States of what he has been saying. He might have made more than he does of the fact that the United States is itself a colonial power and that in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands it has problems as pressing as any we can point to in the empires of other nations. But he has chosen instead, and for perfectly understandable reasons, to show that disfranchised racial minorities in the United States and exploited labor endanger the maintenance and growth of democracy at home. As for our moral position abroad, Mr. DuBois remarks that "the Negro problem forces the United States to abdicate its natural leadership of democracy in the world and to acquiesce in a domination of organized wealth which exceeds anything elsewhere in the world."

In this chapter Mr. DuBois again considers the pattern in which wealth is produced and distributed. Here he suggests that concentrated wealth in the United States limits the spread of industrial as well as political democracy at home and thus stifles its encouragement and extension abroad. As a corrective he

therefore proposes the rationalization of American industry somewhat like that undertaken by Germany between World War I and the rise of Hitler, and a curb on the profit system by means of government control.

In view of the main themes of his book it is only natural that the author should give some attention to the Soviet Union with its record of racial tolerance and its almost total elimination of the profit motive. He points out that the Western nations need not fear communism, provided they attack want and intolerance at home and in the colonial world. Although expressing great admiration for the achievements of the Soviet Union, he is cautious about predicting what role that country will play hereafter. Whether she will succumb to the temptation of once more becoming an empire is assuredly very important in the future of dependent areas.

THE solution of the problems which the author has presented with such vigor throughout the book must be sought, he says, "in the faith and ideals of organized religion," joined with "the scientific knowledge and efficient techniques of economic reform." In order to give political expression to this program he proposes: (1) direct representation of colonial peoples in the General Assembly of the new world organization; (2) a Mandates Commission under the authority of the Economic and Social Council, endowed with greater power than its League predecessor to investigate conditions and act in behalf of colonial peoples; and (3) a statement by colonial powers indicating their willingness to foster the achievement by these peoples of political and economic equality with the mother country and to incorporate them into the body politic or grant them independence.

Although the trusteeship proposals now being discussed at San Francisco leave to each colonial power the decision as to which, if any, territories are to come under the new arrangements, a beginning has been made. Even so, Mr. DuBois' book carries a warning and a reminder that cannot be overlooked. As he says, "the continents which have withstood the European exploitation of the nineteenth century are for that very reason not going to remain quiescent under a new order—unless that new order has a distinct place for them which allows their progress, development, and self-determination."

In reading Mr. DuBois' book, and Americans should read it, they ought to keep one thing in mind: Colonial problems are a reflection of world problems, a microcosm revealing the jumble and tangle of world affairs; a reflection, too, of the clashes and conflicts between nations over a variety of issues. Thus while the provision of wider political and economic horizons for dependent peoples is a goal which Americans ought actively to seek, the solution of colonial problems cannot be achieved independently of the efforts to solve world problems on a world-wide sca'

11-1945

Nathaniel Dett

# Former Pupil Writes Biography Of Late R. Nathaniel Dett

HAMPTON INSTITUTE, Va.—A brief biography of the late Dr. R. Nathaniel Dett, founder of the Musical Art Society at Hampton Institute, is being published at the local college and will be distributed to Musical Art patrons, Don A. Davis, chairman of the society has announced. Dr. Dett died two years ago while engaged in war service at a U. S. O. center in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Commemorating the birth of the distinguished musician, composer, and choir director, who was born in Niagara Falls, on October 11, 1882, the publication will be mailed without charge to patrons of the society who request copies within the next two weeks. It was written by Miss Marguerite Pope of Newport News, a pupil of Dr. Dett at Bennett, and is being printed by the Hampton Institute Press.

Dr. Dett, who initiated the Musical Art Society concerts in 1918, was on the staff of Hampton Institute from 1913 until 1932. He edited the well-known "Religious Folk Songs of the Negro" while at Hampton and led the Hampton Institute choir on its tour of Europe in 1930. Miss Dorothy Maynor, noted soprano, was one of his pupils and a member of the choir.

# Books of the Times

The New York Times
New York, New York

By CHARLES POORE

THERE are some books that don't convince anybody. At best they throw a blinding light on the obvious—or soothingly reinforce points of view and prejudices long and ruggedly maintained. At worst they send readers who hold the opposite point of view frothing into the night—or at least in search of paper on which to write a stirring rebuttal beginning: "How in this age of universal education and rural free delivery anyone can hold such blithering and * * *" And then there are books that by the integrity of their approach can widen our points of view, weaken even prejudices that had practically become heirlooms, and let in air and light. "One Nation,"* a book of many photographs and sparing words about minority groups in America, belongs in that last and more useful category.

9-29-45

Wallace Stegner

The idea behind "One Nation" is that these Americans who were good enough to die together in war are good enough to live together at peace in the land they were without prejudice defending. When there was a hedgerow to be taken or an anti-aircraft battery to be manned, apparently, no one on the scene worried too long or too weightily about the faith, ancestry or shading of the men to do the job. There, as in the war plants, the one target was survival.

## Case Presented in Text and Pictures

"One Nation" could have gone further than it does. In text and pictures it considers the lives and histories of Catholic people, Jewish people, Negro people, people who came to the United States from the Pacific and from Mexico and Spain. It also considers the American Indians—and that inevitably suggests that only their ancestors, after all, were here in the first place. All the rest of us had ancestors who came from somewhere overseas. We are all members of minorities.

What is at the root of prejudice? Under all our prejudices, Mr. Stegner points out, whether they are matters of race, religion or culture, is fear—"the fear of being swamped, overrun, changed or converted or diluted, done out of our jobs or our social position. It is only as a defense, often unscrupulous, of our particular status quo, our particular 'pure' race, our particular 'right' faith, that we can justify our prejudices to ourselves."

Mr. Stegner goes on to say that when we visit other countries as tourists, we rarely feel the same kind of prejudices, though we may feel superior. I'm glad he put in that stop-loss clause: "though we may feel superior." Because there certainly was occasionally something mildly resembling prejudice in the attitude of the American soldier (of whatever heritage) toward the North African Arabs, particularly when the matter of the price of eggs came up, and there were chemical traces of it in Europe, as there may have been in the Pacific. But that is a different story.

## On America's Opportunity

If we couldn't live in tranquillity together in the United States, we'd have small hope of a peaceful world. "No other nation," in Mr. Stegner's words, "has had the opportunity the United States has had to bring so many peoples and cultures together in one society, to learn from all of them, to grow by the contributions they have all made. It follows that no other nation, despite the tragic failures of our principles in many instances, has come so close to promoting a real brotherhood of man. Without our minority groups and the diverse strains of our culture, American society is a pale imitation of Europe. With them, it is something newer and stronger." Whenever we fail, as we do from time to time, whenever we have race riots or show other forms of intolerance pictured in this book's many and eloquent photographs, we set ourselves just so far back in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world.

9-29-45

"One Nation" is a good hard-hitting addition to the "Life in America" series. It was written in collaboration with the editors of Look magazine, which accounts for the lavish collection of pictures. One of the advantages of its considerable range and scope is that it shows that few of us are blameless of all prejudice. Those of us who fit Wescott's definition of a puritan ("a puritan is a man who is sincerely repentant for other people's sins") may find that while condemning others we have been committing God's own plenty of sins of bigotry and prejudice ourselves.

Richmond, Virginia 9-26-45
The Richmond Times-Dispatch

## Dr. Gee and a Series

THE University of Virginia *News Letter* has just published the first of eight important issues which are to appear at biweekly intervals from now until January 15, dealing with public education and health in the State. There are no more vital problems before the people than these, and in shedding light upon them during the months intervening before the opening of the General Assembly in January, DR. WILSON GEE, the editor, is opening the *News Letter's* twenty-second year auspiciously.

The current *News Letter* deals with the basic facts having to do with "Per Capita Income of Virginia Counties for 1940," and while the author, JOHN LITTLEPAGE LANCASTER, of the University of Virginia's Bureau of Population and Economic Research, employs statistical methods which leave the layman bewildered, the results are informing. He does not pretend that his figures on income are exact, and he concedes "an unavoidable margin of error," but the tables and map which appear with the article should be valuable as guides to the ability of the various localities to pay for educational and health services.

In future issues of the *News Letter*, it will present thorough and authoritative studies of Virginia's rank in education, the scale of teachers' pay in the State, the rural school situation, postwar school building needs, vocational education needs, the State's ability to provide, and a public health program.

DR. GEE has been able to arrange for this series so competently and opportunely because no one in Virginia is so well equipped as he to perform the task. As executive secretary last year of the Virginia Education Commission, headed by DR. GEORGE DENNY, he did an immense amount of constructive work, and was, in truth, the dynamo behind the preparation of the commission's epochal report. Although he devoted months of intensive labor to the task, he declined to accept the financial compensation which was offered him by the State.

DR. GEE is the type of citizen who asks no reward for public service, but the people of Virginia should know of the sacrificial and unselfish spirit in which he discharged his responsibilities as executive secretary of the Virginia Education Commission. It was an extremely demanding task, and he carried it through superlatively well.

He is now following through with his series of informative *News Letters*. We invite the attention of Virginians to this series, an important and significant outgrowth of the far-reaching service which DR. GEE performed last year with the Virginia Education Commission.

The New York Times
New York, New York

**CHILDREN OF SOUTH AFRICA.** By Louise A. Stinedorf. Illustrated by Eva Watson. 175 pp. Philadelphia. J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.

9-29-45

**THIS book tells how Pietor killed his first leopard in Tanganyika; how Seetan, one of the pygmies of the Belgian Congo, earned his Okapi belt; how two little girls, one brown and one white, in the Kimberley Diamond country found a box of diamonds; how a Basuto boy sought and obtained the coveted ostrich plumes for a headdress; how Jack, who had come to Barotseland with his father on a scientific expedition, ate barbecued elephant's foot, and other stories, twelve in all, each dealing with a different section of the South African country from Kenya to Capetown. These stories, well told, with a sense of drama and an understanding of what children like, will encourage in readers from 9 to 12 a feeling of friendly interest in the boys and girls of faraway lands.**

# Worth Repeating

The Worker New York, New York 9-30-45

**A RICHMOND INCIDENT, as related in John Beecher's fine book, All Brave Sailors, in which Captain Mulzac of the S. S. Booker T. Washington is ordered out of a bus station there:** The Captain has been quietly listening. "I'll go," he says. "We've got to take the ship out at six o'clock in the morning and we won't be able to if we're in a Richmond jail. But listen," and he raises his voice so all the staring people can hear. "Your orders are no good. Your orders are the kind they give in Hitler's Germany. While we're out there fighting fascism, you fellows down here are working for fascism in the United States. After we get through smashing fascism over there, we're coming back here—right here to Virginia—and finish the job."

The Nation

## Black and White

New York, New York 9-29-45

ALTHOUGH SOME AMERICANS are growing up today in their attitudes toward the Negro problem, the vast majority continue to exhibit their immaturity not only in their attitudes but even in the matter of elementary knowledge about their darker fellow-citizens. It is for this latter group that Bucklin Moon has assembled in a single volume, "Primer for White Folks" (Doubleday, Doran, $3.50), a variety of documents, historical and sociological essays, sketches, and short stories dealing with Negro-white relations. Despite its title, however, this is no book for the simple-minded. Not only do the essays contain sound factual knowledge and the mature reflections of scholars and students of the problem, but the fiction represents sophisticated attitudes and subtle insights.

In Part I, Heritage, the selection by W. E. B. DuBois of material on African culture and the discussion of the Negro problem as a case history by Carey McWilliams are of outstanding value. Black and White Mores are presented in Part II in a number of selections from the works of well-known writers of American fiction. Wendell Willkie's article on Citizens of Negro Blood, which appeared in *Collier's*, opens the third part, Today and Tomorrow. The selections here cover practically every phase of the Negro problem from the integration of Negroes into American economic life to the Detroit riots and American discrimination against Negro soldiers in England. The editor, a Southerner, who is well known for his sincere desire to see the Negro integrated into American life, has rendered a real service in bringing together in readable form a collection containing fundamental information on so many facets of Negro-white relations.

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

## Award winning books deal mostly with Negro dilemma

Los Angeles Tribune Los Angeles, California 9-3-45

CLEVELAND — The Negro has been the major topic of the 14 books to win the annual Anisfield Award ($500 to $1500), established in 1935 by the Anisfield-Wolf Foundation for books effectively aiding better racial relationships in the contemporary world.

First to win the award, selected by a board of judges from the Saturday Review of Literature, was Harold Gosnell's "Negro Politicians," which told the story of the rise of Negro politicians in Chicago. Next was "We Europeans," by Julian S. Muxley and A. C. Haddon. In 1937, the prize went to Elin L. Anderson for her book "We Americans," a Vermont welfare worker's study of the racial problems in an American city.

9-3-45

In 1943, $1,500 was given to Maurice Samuel for his novel, "The World of Sholem Aleichem," a study of a Russian-Jewish community 50 years ago, and second prize went to Roi Ottley for his "New World A-Coming, a Study of Harlem."

Gwethalyn Graham's novel dealing with Jew-Christian relations, "Earth and High Heaven," and Gunnar Myrdal's "American Dilemma," a two-volume study of the Negro in the United States, won $1,000 prizes last year.

NEW YORK — Neither Congress nor the Administration did anything about reconversion and unemployment until panicked by a Socialist victory in Britain and the sudden end of the war, Socialist leader Norman Thomas charged today, protesting the Wagner committee's refusal to grant time for Socialist testimony at the hearings on the Murray Full Employment bill.

Only two features of the Murray bill were praised by Mr. Thomas — recognition that provision for full employment is a legitimate concern of government, and the job budget as a basis for constructive action. He declared the bill breaks down in its assumption that with a little federal aid, private capitalism can provide the full employment which, Mr. Thomas pointed out, it did not provide in America or anywhere else before the war.

The Socialist leader said full

# The Dilemma of the Black Man in a White World

The New York Times New York

THE ROBBED HEART. By Clifton Cuthbert. 219 pp. New York: L. B. Fischer. $2.50. 12-2-45

IF HE HOLLERS LET HIM GO. By Chester B. Himes. 249 pp. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. $2.50.

By JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

THE psychological predicament of the Negro in a white world is one of the most challenging subjects for fiction in our time. Powerful novels have been written around this theme by Waldo Frank ("Holiday"), Erskine Caldwell ("Trouble in July"), William Faulkner ("Light in August," "Absolom, Absolom!"), as well as work of lesser importance by Carl Van Vechten, Claude McKay and others. In their treatment of this theme none of the writers named have made a very deep impression on the general reading public. With the appearance of Richard Wright's "Native Son" in 1940 the world realized that the soul of the Negro had been presented with an unsophisticated honesty, a directness and a depth of psychological penetration worthy of this tragically serious subject, and his book started a vogue which promises to last long and carry weight both artistic and sociological. It was this vogue which made a popular success of Lillian Smith's "Strange Fruit" and which this season has emboldened the publishers to bring out "The Robbed Heart" and "If He Hollers Let Him Go."

12-2-45

With novels written around a theme of such pressing sociological concern one is in doubt whether to deal with them strictly as works of literary art or to assay their importance as social documents. But then one realizes that it comes to the same thing in the end. For given a reasonable skill in presentation, the honesty, the insight and what we may call the moral responsibility of the author are what will determine the literary merit of the book. 12-2-45

Clifton Cuthbert is a very clever white man, an experienced writer, with a smooth, cool competence in dealing with character and language. As with Miss Smith, his subject is love between whites and blacks, both on an unusually high level of intelligence, education and sentimental refinement. The girl belongs to the West Indian aristocracy of Harlem and is quite a match for the man, who is a well-to-do connoisseur and professional critic of jazz. The story is less pretentious than "Strange Fruit" and is brought quietly and firmly to an "inevitable" and somewhat ironic conclusion. It flatters the reader to be made to move so intimately in circles so strange and intriguing. But one is not sure in the end that one has learned anything more significant about Negroes than that they have the same faculties and passions as the whites. 12-2-45

CHESTER HIMES had the immense advantage, for our purpose, of writing about Negroes from the inside, from their side of the fence. His leading character is a worker in a shipyard on the West Coast, a man of average intelligence but without social standing or education. The girl he loves is, to be sure, the daughter of a very successful Negro physician, with social contacts among the white intelligentsia. But Bob finds himself at every turn subject to insult and humiliation because of his race. Everything spells for him, as for Wright's Bigger, exclusion from opportunity from consideration, from all that might make one feel of some account in the world or even at home there; and his soul is a troubled vessel of fear and shame, rage and frustration. He has some inkling of a scale of values and life wisdom which, under happier circumstances, might have made possible for him a more normal adjustment. But this comes too late to save him from the common fate of the ignorant and feeling among the untouchables.

The dénouement is brought about with the help of melodramatic clichés which one could readily spare, though they are credible enough. The important thing is that the character of Bob is sincerely and solidly drawn, and that his character, his state of moral being, is a function of his social situation. He is a black man without place in a world of hostile whites. They are hostile in the sense of denying him recognition or any of the means by which he might realize his nature. This book has not the power and sweep, the subtlety and depth, of "Native Son." But in its lesser way it is an impressive performance. 12-2-45 It will have done a great service to us all if it tends to promote a sympathetic understanding of the simple fact which lies at the heart of the Negro problem. This fact is the Negro's sense of being excluded from our community and thereby in effect deprived of the very bread of life.

11-1945

# Banned Novel Is Accepted By New York Library

Northwest Herald
Seattle, Wash.
1-16-45

NEW YORK—"It Was Not My World," sensational novel written by Deaderick F. Jenkins, promising young author of Los Angeles, has been accepted by the public library of New York City, which sent him a check for a copy last week.

The response of the N. Y. library was encouraging to Mr. Jenkins, whose book has been banned by the public library in Los Angeles, which evidently considered the book too controversial. The novel, published by Mr. Jenkins himself, when white publishing houses refused to accept it because of its treatment of the racial situation in the South, attacks the system of segregation and dual citizenship in Dixie, and the Nation as a whole. 1-16-45

Commenting on the attitude of the library here, Mr. Jenkins scored the institution, accused the officials of being prejudiced against writers who contend for a free society and real democracy in America. Said he, "Our public libraries do not smile too favorably upon those who denounce too openly our American Hitlers."

Mr. Jenkins said his book has received wide distribution and that many colleges have bought copies wor their libraries. He believes more young writers should have the courage to compose and produce their own works rather than write sentiments which appeal to white publishers.—C. N. S.

11-1945

# Critics Review Book On Life of Joe Louis

The Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

NEW YORK — (ANP) — Many of the nation's outstanding literary critics have received advance copies of Margery Miller's book, "Joe Louis: American," which gives a gr..phic picture of the life of Joe Louis, world's heavyweight boxing champion. 11-17-45

"I share your enthusiasm about the life of Joe Louis," said Mrs. Roosevelt after reviewing the book. "I never thought I would read until 2:30 a. m. about prize fighting or prize fighters. The story of the man himself is what held me."

Caswell Adams, King Features syndicate sport writer, wrote:

"Boxing writers who thought they knew all about the heavyweight champion will add greatly to their background by reading Miss Miller's book on Joe Louis."

Nat Flesicher, editor of the Ring magazine, predicted the stotry of Joe's career "will go over with a bang." The author, who graduated with honors last May from Wellesley college, saw her first championship fight when she was 15. It was the dramatic second Louis-Schmeling bout. 11-17-45

The army's citation with Louis' Legion of Merit medal acknowledges that he "entailel considerable risk to his boxing future as the champion heavy-weight of the world, but he willingly volunteered such action rather than disappoint the soldiers who desired to see him in the ring."

Joe has announced his plan to defend his title against Billy Conn sometime next June.

# Negro Handbook Objective Record of Negro Life

[*The Negro Handbook, 1944, Compiled and Edited by Florence Murray, New York: Current Reference Publications.*]

p. m. nik. 3-10-45

By LESTER B. GRANGER

**THE PUBLISHERS' RASH OF VOLUMES** dealing with the Negro which has broken out during the last few years indicates to some extent how deep is current public interest in matters of race relations. It is significant to note how many of these volumes have dealt with opinions regarding race relations and how few have presented important and authoritative facts. This is natural because facts that stand up under questioning criticism are hard to gather and frequently uninteresting when gathered. Opinions are much more handy and exciting to deal with. For this reason it is good to note that Florence Murray, compiler and editor of "The Negro Handbook," has stuck to her job of keeping the American public up to date on "current facts, statistics and general information concerning Negroes in the United States." This is the second edition of the Negro Handbook, the first appearing in 1942, and the second job is so much improved over the first as to earn a word of commendation for the editor. 3-10-45

## MUCH INFORMATION

An enormous amount of important information is packed into 286 pages. One guesses from reading the index that the editor conducted a private poll of her own before compiling her material in order to be sure that the kind of information her readers are most apt to desire would be included in the *Handbook*. Most of us have frequently had the annoying experience of buying a book for its reference value and digging repeatedly into it for specific information only to find that every subject under the sun is covered except the one on which we wish definite information.

This is not true of the *Handbook*. It presents a broad coverage of subjects including figures on population, civil rights, education, housing, business, crime health and vital statistics labor and industry, and agriculture. Books published by and about Negroes, Negroes in the motion pictures, Negroes in sports, receive summary mention. The greatest space, forty-five pages, naturally is given to the Negro's participation in the armed forces during World War II.

## INTERESTING READING

When Maida Springer recently left for England on a mission for the AFL she asked this reviewer's advice as to two or three reference books which she should carry with her and which would help her to interpret Negro life in America to the workers of Great Britain. *The Negro Handbook* was among the three volumes recommended on the ground that no other volume dealing with Negro life contained so many important facts or dealt with so wide a cross-section of the Negro's experience in the United States.

If this review makes the *Handbook* sound like a brown edition of the Encyclopedia Brittanica then it does scant justice to the volume, for the book makes interesting reading. The Hillburn jimcro school case and its handling by the NAACP, the race riots of Detroit, Beaumont, Los Angeles and Harlem, the sketch of the President's Fair Employment Practice Act, and the report on the employment of Negroes in war industries—these are sample subjects culled from a casual reading of the *Handbook* which have real interest as well as lasting informational value.

## SIMPLE INDEX 3-10-45

It is impossible for the average Negro reader to peruse the *Handbook* without being aware that the racial problem is dynamic and hopeful of progressive solution. It is equally impossible for the average white reader to glance through the *Handbook's* pages without being challenged by the broad spread and serious nature of America's Number 1 social problem.

Professional librarians and other experts in the encyclopedic methodology have declared that the *Handbook* can be greatly improved in the matter of indexing and cross-referencing. This reviewer yields to superior judgment on this point but he meekly contends that what may be a fault in the eyes of the librarian is a virtue so far as the average reader is concerned. The more simple the index and the less elaborate the cross-referencing the more apt the average reader is to find what he wants when he want it—for this after all is the purpose of a handbook. Admittedly, the volume could with profit double its pages—and possibly its price—and also admittedly, fewer people would then buy it. If the purpose of a handbook is to present the greatest amount of information to the greatest number of readers in the most convenient form possible, then the *Negro Handbook* for 1944 has amply justified its editor's investment of time and the support of the reading public. It is the kind of volume which should be on the book shelf of each person concerned with American social dynamics and with the Negro's unceasing struggle for a place in the sun of full American democracy.

## OBJECTIVE RECORDING

The book can be used in an old-fashioned barber shop argument; it can be referred to in preparation of a lecture or sermon; it can assist the high school or college student in preparing a thesi. It is an aid to any American citizen who wishes authoritative information as to how one-tenth of America's population lives, what its experiences have been and of what its dreams of tomorrow are composed.

What the Negro newspaper is in the field of racial discussion and what Myrdal's American Dilemma is in the field of sociological inquiry, the *Negro Handbook* is in the field of objective compilation and recording of the daily facts of our racial existence. It should be read and purchased widely and it should be kept on the desk for ready and frequent reference.

# Negro Jobs in Postwar Will Guage Democracy

Daily Worker

By WILLIAM L. PATTERSON

The pamphlet **Negro Workers After the War** is a serious effort to deal with the job problem as it will probably affect America through the Negro in the postwar period. The place of the Negro in the labor movement, and the place of the labor movement in the battle to free America from the color bar, must be thoroughly understood. Just as American labor could not begin a serious struggle for its own emancipation until slavery had been removed, so today labor and the rest of progressive America can find no ultimate solution to the problems posed by democracy without making the removal of slave remnants an inseparable part of the struggle.

Wm. L. Patterson

The author has made the question of jobs for Negro workers in the postwar period the crucial issue of his study. If an effort is made to foist the discriminatory practices of prewar industry upon the postwar period, it must be ruthlessly combatted and defeated, otherwise the tension which will thus be provoked will lead to far worse results in every possible respect than did the racial clashes which plagued the prewar era. That Negro workers were, in the past, even used as strikebreakers reflects in a measure the failure of labor during that period to protect this section of its own. The desperate struggles which will follow any failure to protect the rights of Negro labor in the postwar era, will extend far beyond the ranks of labor. They will tear the labor movement wide open. That is what American fascism wants.

7-18-'45

The writer finds his answer as to how best to protect the rights of Negro labor in an adjustment of seniority rules. He proposes such an adjustment of these rules as will protect the newly won gains of the Negro workers and, at the same time, afford greater protection to the union and, consequently, to white labor. His point is very well taken, but in his approach he makes a number of statements which must be corrected at once if his ultimate answer is to be of practical value.

For instance:

**Negro Workers After the War** enumerates the forces responsible for the wartime gains of Negro labor. First is listed "the Roosevelt administration," then the FEPC. Even management is placed before labor. That is not correct, as I am sure the author will today agree. Without the struggles of progressive labor along this front long before and during the war, the Roosevelt administration would not have created the FEPC. Certainly management would not have made concessions in this sphere without the pressure of labor.

The question must be posed: "Will the progressive forces of America win the battle for economic democracy along the color line?" The answer is: "They will lose it if they don't see the job issue and the place of the seniority rules more clearly than they do now, and that in a very short time." Seniority holds the key as the situation now stands.

It must be clear, of course, that the only solution is "jobs for all." Jobs for all mean jobs for Negroes. We in America have not reached that level of democracy. Only the most desperate struggle of a united labor movement offers the possibility of reaching this goal.

In the absence of a "jobs for all" situation there must be that approach to the division of existing jobs that will prevent job tenure from degenerating into a battle royal between the forces of labor—white against black, men against women, civilians who were not inducted against veterans. Labor cannot, under present conditions, guarantee full employment, but it can control some of the labor-splitting effects of unemployment.

## SENIORITY

7-18-'45

Seniority in job tenure is a means to an end: the end is the protection of the worker and his union. It is not an end in itself. When it can be used as a weapon against either the worker or the union, it becomes a weapon against both. Negro workers, an inseparable part of the labor movement, cannot under existing conditions receive equitable or equal treatment under seniority rules as they now operate. The fault is not the Negro's.

Monopoly capital kept the Negro out of certain industries and out of some jobs in all industries. White labor aided its own enemy, the monopolists, by refusing to admit Negroes into some unions or allowing them equal opportunities for jobs. White labor accepted the color bar. Its leadership in many instances regarded the labor movement as the property of white labor, rather than as an instrument of struggle through which all labor could achieve greater democracy. The idea that the labor movement is the private property of white labor still persists. This idea must be destroyed.

The acceptance of this position will at once clarify the reasons why seniority rules must be altered to protect all equally. Negro workers came into industry last through no fault of their own. They must not be penalized in the distribution of postwar jobs by an exercise of seniority rules so as to protect only the first-comers, who were white. Certain white elements in labor's ranks, acting as agents of monopoly, helped to keep Negroes out of those jobs. The Negro worker knows this. In fact, he does not always clearly see the vicious hand of monopoly behind the discrimination. He does see labor. Labor must prove itself to the Negro if there is to be unity along the color line.

7-18-'45

The CIO has declared that "out of this war must emerge a complete understanding and determination on the part of the American people that full political and economic equality must be accorded to all Americans." But is it not true that "freedom is more than a word?" How is this pledge to be implemented? The manner in which seniority rules are applied will greatly affect its achievement. There will be a dislocation of labor during the reconversion era. If seniority is operated "normally" the Negro must be victimized. In the long run the **whole** labor movement will suffer.

There must be an equitable revision of the operation of seniority rules. This is a matter which some blind leaders wish to leave to chance, but such gambling can only lead to destruction. On this point **Negro Workers After the War** makes a case which has to be thoroughly studied and applied.

11-1945

Primer For White Folks

at. Review of Literature
(New York City)
SEP 29 1945

# Some Things Adults Ought to Know

*PRIMER FOR WHITE FOLKS. Edited by Bucklin Moon. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co.* 1945. 491 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by H. A. OVERSTREET

THE poet Robinson once wrote: "The world is not a prison house, but rather a spiritual kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell GOD with the wrong blocks." In America, we have been trying to spell Freedom—and the blocks we have used have made a queer contradictory jumble. For over eighty years of our national life, we kept putting the block Slavery next to the block Equality; and when the two wouldn't fit together—equality having something to do with all men being born free—we stuck in another block between them: Black-Man-Less-Than-Man.

That ought to have held them steady. The land of the brave could in all sincerity be the land of the free if black folk could be thought of as not human at all, but merely subhuman beasts of burden.

But history, as we remember, knocked the whole wobbly contraption of contradictions to the ground; and we had to start building again.

And again we are at it. Equality stands there foursquare and beautiful; but near it now stands the wobbly block Jim Crow. And once more, to hold them steady, bewildered adults try to stick in a compensating block: Negro Inferiority.

When will we learn to spell Freedom as it should be spelled: without equivocation—meaning what it says, and saying what it means; a word of glory; a symbol to make us proud.

"Primer for White Folks" is a book to teach us how to spell. White folks who think they already know how will not like this book: probably will not deign to read it, since it will seem to question their social and political literacy. But white folk who feel the anguish of bewilderment; who know, like Socrates, that they do not know, and that there are things that now they must know; white folk who want to do a better job of building Freedom into a structure that will stand, will want this book as a first aid to new learning.

For it is now a matter of new learning—for all of us. New history has to be written, and read. We were all of us brought up on history that left most of the important, deeply human things unsaid. We have now to start reading the kind of history that honestly and understandingly includes in its recital men, women, and children.

Negroes on a slaver back in 1839. It is to see American politicians, lawyers, business men, townsmen, and farmers—the citizens of the new democracy—in all the cross currents of their venality, shortsightedness, cruelty, as well as sympathy and courageous sense of justice. Again, to read Henrietta Buckmaster's account of the Underground Railroad is to be made aware of a kind of bravery—equally among whites and blacks—that our school histories have passed over with a few unrevealing words.

We need to know, as the Writers' Project of Virginia tells it, the story of the pathetic revolts of black peo-

ple driven to futile desperation. We also need to know, as Carey McWilliams recounts it, the record of our weak-kneed appeasement of the South and of our ugly betrayal of the Negro in the years following the Civil War. Finally, we insulated and all too-ignorant North Americans need to know the Africa whence came our profits and our shame. No history book ever drew for us—as W. E. B. DuBois here draws it—the picture of human beings, in that land we learned to call "Darkest Africa," shaping their collective lives in ways that had about as much beauty and dignity and common sense in them, as well as ignorance and superstition and brutality, as one finds among the rest of the human race.

Again, new fiction has to be written, and read. Fiction is a way of making individuals come alive in the fulness and vividness of their personal selves. Fiction has, on the whole, done badly by the Negro. It has portrayed him as either a savage or a carefree, half-moronic child. Where it has sought to defend him, it has put off the weightier matter of trying to understand him.

"Primer for White Folks" presents a kind of fiction about Negroes and whites that has never before been written, but that promises to come increasingly from the pens of writers who have become sensitive to the major tragedy of the two races. This, in fact, is one great hope that the book reveals: our writers—nineteen of them are here represented—are beginning to write fiction with a poignancy of understanding and a skill of portrayal that must eventually crack the hard crust of white ignorance and complacency. Nor are these stories mere moralistic tracts dressed up as fiction. They are fictional art in the highest sense of the word: stories that stand in their own right as stories, but that tell tales the human race now needs to know.

New history . . . new fiction . . . and finally, new prophecy. Here, in this book, the American of a new mentality is heard speaking. The old slogans of liberty and equality are given new pertinence and drive in the context of a problem that may not much longer be left unsolved. The voices that speak in Part Three of this book—"Today and Tomorrow"—are not voices of appeasement but of challenge. It is significant, and wholly right, that Wendell Willkie should lead off with a call to the American people to undo the injustice they have done. "The deep patience of the Negro people is nearing its end," he dares to tell us. This is the document that killed him in his own party. It is one that will make him live in a chastened and revitalized democracy.

New prophecy means a summing up of human values. This, too, is the great hope this book reveals. The best minds among us are getting a new slant on the things that come first. In words that are both lucid and compelling, they chart our new road to Freedom.

There is one amazing document in this volume for whose inclusion I am most grateful to Mr. Moon. It is a letter to the editor of *The London Times* written by the actress, Fanny Kemble. She wrote it in answer to an article the *Times* had published in which the writer had dealt witheringly with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is now old stuff to most of us; but what Fanny Kemble has to say about the pompous ignorance of this writer will be refreshingly new to those who read it. Fanny Kemble was married to a Southerner, lived in the South, and knew her South. What she has to say about its barbarous culture will come as a surprise to those who have been brought up on pretty fictional pictures of Southern plantations and Southern gentry.

"Primer for White Folks" is in a true sense a primer. It tells the primary things that we bewildered infants need to know.

## APPEAL TO CONSCIENCE

*PRIMER FOR WHITE FOLKS, Edited by Bucklin Moon. Published by Doubleday Doran & Co.; 491 pages, $3.50.*

The author says he has not done this collection for experts in race relations, but for "the average American who is disturbed by the rising racial tensions which he feels around him and by the paradox of white and Negro relationship in a democracy waging a war of liberation and equality." Many Southerners will not relish this book but they can at least draw from it the comfort of knowing that the problem is not sectional but national. The Negro has gotten political equality in the North and West, but he is still at an economic disadvantage.

This indictment must be accepted with good grace by all fair-minded and informed whites throughout the land. The fact is undeniable that Negroes are being barred from the economic opportunity to which they are entitled as Americans. You will find in this book Southerners who speak out bluntly to this effect. They seem to say that those who are all for keeping the Negro down for the sake of "white supremacy" are at odds with their own desire. For it is clear that fear of "social equality" would go out of the window once the Negro showed through his use of economic equality that this is what he wants above all else.

There is another respect in which the traditional attitude keeping the Negro in a second-rate position defeats itself. The exodus of colored workers and farmhands from the South poses a serious threat to this region. By the same token, it accentuates congestion and ferment in Eastern and Western cities. There, too, there is much to be done to redress the balance. For race prejudice makes itself felt in many ways to deny the Negro his rights even in quarters which are quick to cry out against discriminations in the South. Slowly there is being built up in the South, as elsewhere in the nation, a recognition of the conscience of the American people has grown free man in a free country.—JOHN MALONE.

The Birmingham News
Birmingham, Ala.
11-9-45

But even in this somber book, there are indications of a better day for the Negro. The square deal calculated to make him a really uneasy. More and more persons in all sections have been shaken out of indifference to the race question into an eagerness to improve the situation. It required a Supreme Court decision to force the South to play fair on the score of Negro education. Yet the mandate is being faced with a lack of resent-

11-1945 The Rising Wind- Walter White

# About Books

New York Amsterdam News

By CONSTANCE H. CURTIS

*A RISING WIND, by Walter White. Doubleday, Doran, New York, 1945. 155 pp. $2.00.*

3-10-45

**A Report on the War**

The years which Walter White has spent as executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have not made an optimist of him. He has learned from bitter experience the tenacity and hardiness of racial prejudice in the United States. Now, as a war correspondent reporting on his coverage of the war fronts all over the world, he has again to realize that all is not as it should be.

A RISING WIND is the factual, objectively written work of a man who had a chance, at first hand, to see how the Negro soldier is faring in this war. Both the good and the bad in the treatment of the Negro in uniform were observed and set down by him.

As one of the sorest spots in the heart of the average Negro citizen, the treatment of their sons in uniform is of the utmost importance. Mr. White points out quite clearly that the attitude of the armed forces toward Negro members is in large degree a reflection of the attitude of the whole United States toward the Negro citizen. It is a confusing and paradoxical picture.

We have within our army the 99th Pursuit Squadron, which has not only been allowed to fight, (an honor withheld from most brown-skinned soldiers) but has fought as an integral part of the white 79th Pursuit Squadron. We have, too, the ever-recurring experience of seeing well-trained Negro men kept out of the divisions of the Army in which they would be most useful and shunted to the loading and unloading of ships, or the driving of trucks. Negro soldiers are not forgetting these things.

3-10-45

The Army which is presently in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia is made up of men who are different from their fathers who fought in the last war. According to Mr. White, these men have been quickened with the desire for equality and chafled with the shackles of discrimination which bind them. They want to be fighters now, and they will be fighters for democracy when the war is ended and they return home. These things are clearly stated in A RISING WIND.

**A Profile of Eboue**

One of the most outstanding chapters in this volume is one written on the great black statesman Felix Eboue, who prior to his untimely death two years ago, helped turn the tide for France and the world against the axis.

**Mr. White**

Little has been known to the general public of this man and less has been written. This past lack adds greater importance to the chapter in which the author gives a summation of the life and philosophy, as well as the work of Aboue, who died after helping to assure France's right to live.

American Negro soldiers have learned many things during the war and a fuller sense of their inherent equality is not the least of these. Conversely, the peoples of the countries in which they have been sent have learned to know and respect them. This is not a good situation for continuation of discrimination. In fact, it is so poor that Mr. White feels the average soldier will not accept the "old way of life." Else, the future will be an unsettled one.

3-10-45

**Memo to the Allies**

"The United States, Great Britain, France and other Allied nations must choose without delay one of two courses," the author states, "to revolutionize their racial concepts and practices, to abolish imperialism and grant full equality to all of its people, or else prepare for World War III . . . A wind IS rising—a wind of determination by the have-nots of the world to share the benefits of freedom and prosperity which the haves of the earth have tried to keep exclusively for themselves."

11-1945

A Rising Wind-- Walter White

# Two Different Slants On the Race Question

Courier Journal
Louisville Ky.

*A Review by Harvey Curtis Webster*

A RISING WIND: By Walter White. 355 pp. Doubleday Doran. $2.

SWING LOW: By Edwin A. Peeples. 293 pp. Houghton, Mifflin Co. $2.50.

"A wind is rising—a wind of determination by the havenots of the world to share the benefits of freedom and prosperity which the haves of the earth have tried to keep exclusively for themselves. The wind blows all over the world. Whether that wind develops into a hurricane is a decision we must make now and in the days when we form the peace."

Walter White's book, from which this quotation is lifted, is naturally and largely concerned with the determination of the American Negro to share the benefits of freedom and prosperity." His observations in this book are largely the product of a recent and extended tour of the training camps and fighting fronts. As secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and as a Negro who has no observable Negro characteristics, he was fitted particularly well to observe both white and Negro opinion—as "A Rising Wind" clearly shows.

His report will come as a shock to many white people, as a reason for reasonable optimism to others. There is change and ferment and liberalization and Negro-baiting in the armed forces. There is, for example, the Georgia boy who went to the colored U. S. O. because of his many Negro friends; and there is, on the other hand, the Southern officer who issued a prejudiced directive that opposed almost point by point the very liberal directive General Eisenhower issued on the Negro. Here one will find tales of liberal Southerners who are resolved that conditions must improve all over the nation, side by side with stories of illiberal Southerners who spread throughout an English community where colored troops were quartered the myth that Negroes have tails.

4-29-45

White himself is very temperate and very reasonable. He makes no attempt to prove all Negroes perfect, all whites imperfect. His anger naturally rises at some of the instances of injustice he has uncovered, but his reasonable mind always tempers even his anger. "A Rising Wind" is a vivid, fast-paced book that manages to illuminate many other problems besides that of race. Since I am always hopeful about the potentialities of reasonableness in human beings, I find it difficult to believe that anyone can retain his prejudices comfortably after reading White's temperate and excellent book.

4-29-45

I find it almost equally difficult to imagine anyone's emerging from a reading of Edwin A. Peeples' "Swing Low" without suffering some harm—at least if he takes it as representative gospel about the Southern Negro. Willy Mack, a Georgia Negro, goes from the farm to the city because his wife, Amy, has itching feet. In Atlanta's Billiard Alley, he makes a place for himself because of his eccentric industry and honesty.

After becoming innocently involved in a number of robberies and murders, and after seeing the operation of white injustice in a courtroom almost exclusively peopled by "nigger haters," he returns to the simple farm life with which his primitive faculties can cope more easily.

It is not about the story that I am dubious. It could have happened. And Peeples' heart is certainly on the right side as far as "nigger hating" juries are concerned. However, since I have just finished judging a Negro newspaper contest in which there were a number of highly intelligent entrants from Atlanta, I cannot accept as representative the oversimple characterization he gives his Negroes. All of his Negroes are uneducated, given to cutting and gross immorality. It may be that there is a Billiard Alley in Atlanta, and it may be that Negroes such as he describes live there, but there undoubtedly are dissimilar Negro sections there, too, and of these Peeples never suggests the existence.

A propaganda novel such as this, where an oversimplified interpretation of an exceedingly complex situation is made plausible, makes dangerous reading in times when tension tends to produce emotional thinking. Although Peeples' novel is expert from the point of view of craftsmanship, it is dangerous for its support of a stereotype and for its oversimplification of intricacy.

4-29-45

Walter White's book will help us because he tells the complex truth, and so will Bucklin Moon's fine "The Darker Brother" (perhaps the best novel about the Negro that has been written by a white man). But if we must have oversimplification, I prefer the generous and deft sentimentality of Lillian Smith to the ungenerous and deft stereotyping of Edwin Peeples.

# "Land of The Noble Free"

New York AGE

By LAYLE LANE

3-17-45

THE story of the discrimination against the Negro soldier with its accompanying humiliations and injustices is such a familiar one to those who have followed the Negro Press closely that "The Rising Wind", Walter White's narrative of Army jim crow in England, North Africa and Italy is not new in much of its detail.

For that large body of Americans however to whom the Negro Press is still a closed book, "The Rising Wind", is important; first, because it provides an ably written, first-hand report of the status of the Negro soldier; secondly, it poses, through that status, the world-wide question of race relations which the white world must face justly or be completely overwhelmed in a third World War.

3-17-45

Mr. White quotes from Sumner Wells, Pearl Buck, William Phillips and Wendell Willkie to show that there are some of our white Americans aware of this problem of race and the necessity to rid the world of all practices of white supremacy. Unless this is done the only other alternative is another World War. "One of the chief deterrents," writes Mr. White, "will be Russia", since the author envisions all of eastern Europe under domination of Russia, and also India, China, Burma and Malaya within "The Russian orbit as the lesser of the two dangers."

There is certainly nothing in the present Russian foreign policy to justify any hope that Russia will act as a liberator to the darker peoples; there is everything to indicate from her internal policies and those in the so-called liberated countries of the Baltic and Balkans that anything outside the sphere of Stalinism will be more ruthlessly treated than civil and political opposition in the western world.

3-17-45

Liberation for the Negro soldier as well as for the darker people must come from their own, well planned and well organized struggles for the complete overthrow of the system of imperialism and all that bolsters it up.

For the Negro soldier, Mr. White and the National NAACP lost an invaluable opportunity when they refused to handle the Lynn case—the suit of Winfred Lynn against the Army for its violation of the non-discriminatory clause of the Draft Act of 1940. In this case, the NAACP could have used its influence, in cooperation with others, to arouse all Negro and white America to the hypocrisy of fighting a war for democracy by violation of democratic principles. It could have shown up the reactionary policies of the army and effected far more of a change than could be brought about by Mr. White's trip abroad and his recommendations for more Negro combat troops.

3-17-45

For granted that all Negro soldiers were made into combat troops, there is still the discrimination in selection, training, housing, better housing and recreation here in America.

Until this is changed all the killing Negroes do abroad will not alter their status. It is a question, too, whether we should accept the values of the army that only those who are engaged in actual destruction should be honored most. The construc- roads, schools, hospitals and other facilities to raise the living

3-17-45

standards and to improve the economic status of the natives."

He wrote also "Native Policy in Equatorial Africa" described by Mr. White as "one of the ablest inquiries into colonial administration" . . . which has been written. In cooperation with his wife, he published "The Tom-Tom Language of Ubangi", in which was demonstrated that the notes of the tom-tom form an exact counterpart of a spoken language." He planned further reforms for French Equatorial Africa, though not independence, because he was more French than African.

The story of what Eboue did for France in 1940 should give Africa a decided voice in the making of the peace. For this story, "The Rising Wind" is important.

# Reporting on Our Negro Troops Overseas

By JOHN DESMOND

AT the last counting there were 701,678 Negroes in the United States Army. Of these, 211,368 were overseas; the rest were scattered at various stations in the United States. Only a few of the troops overseas had seen active combat duty. Those who had—like the Ninety-ninth Pursuit Squadron of the MAAF of the Ninety-second Infantry in Italy—had made combat records comparable to their white fellow-soldiers. But in the Negroes' eyes these had been few in proportion to the number of Negroes in uniform. This "discrimination" has been the subject of study by numerous observers having a dual objective: (1) to improve the morale of Negro soldiers and sailors and (2) to try to profit by the experiences of Negroes and whites in meeting and, in the long run, solving America's race problem.

One such study is offered in Walter White's survey of the conditions of Negro troops in England, Africa and Italy. Mr. White went overseas with the consent and active cooperation of the American High Command. He had an excellent opportunity to observe the relations between Negroes and whites in their billets and, in England at least, the relations between Negroes and the native white population. This book is a report on those observations. For the most part it is a pulling together and an elucidation of information that has trickled back to this country in the form of newspaper accounts and letters from soldiers.

In brief it adds up to this: that much of the racial discrimination that is an unfortunate part of American life has been exported to England and other war theatres; that many white Americans, despite the many changes that war has brought them, have not altered greatly in their racial thinking; and that, in a more hopeful vein, there has been, particularly among enlisted men, a noticeable letting down of racial bars.

IN evaluating these observations Mr. White discouragingly points out that the first two represent conditions that are fairly constant, while the third exists chiefly in combat areas where men are drawn into close interdependence by the presence of danger. This prompted him to plead the more fervently with American military authorities to assign greater numbers of Negroes to first-line divisions. In this quest, he gratefully comments, he found many Army officers, from General Eisenhower down, sympathetic and helpful.

Mr. White concedes that it is too late in this war to change the patterns of the Army and Navy in such a way as to hasten a solution of the post-war problem. But he reminds us that Negro soldiers and sailors who have served in the uniforms of the United States in the various war theatres will not be content to return to the old way of life in the post-war era. He writes:

> The vigorous efforts of many white Americans to spread the poison of race hatred in other countries, even as the war against Hitler was being fought, [explains] why the Negro veteran will return to America disillusioned and cynical. . . . Yet the Negro soldier's attitude is not one of defeatist disillusionment. The majority of Negro soldiers will return home convinced that whatever betterment of their lot is achieved must come largely through their own efforts. They will return determined to use those efforts to the utmost.

Walter White.

How white America meets this challenge, Mr. White implies, may well determine the stability and durability of the peace. He points out, as have many other commentators, that the Negro problem is no longer exclusively American. In a world in which the so-called "white races" are in the minority, Mr. White reminds us, the non-whites will regard our relations among fellow-Americans as an earnest of our intentions toward the people of China, India and Africa. It is a challenge that cannot be sidestepped. Mr. White's reasoned and reserved contribution to it deserves to be read by all who are concerned with the realization of Dumbarton Oaks.

# New Times

ANY book that Walter White, national secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, writes concerning Negroes is likely to be a protest against racial discrimination. That is good. His new book, A Rising Wind (Doubleday-Doran), is no exception to the rule.

His target is racial discrimination in the armed forces as he saw it on tours to the European and Pacific theatres of war.

The book proves, once more, that such discrimination exists which, of course, is not a very difficult job. Mr. White, I am sure, would be one of the first to recognize that one does not have to travel to Europe or to the Pacific to find this evil contradiction within an American democracy at war against fascism. And although some progress has been made against the hitherto frozen pattern of disgraceful Jimcrowism within our armed forces (which still amounts to a white and a black army), it is to be hoped that Mr. White's book will help impress an ever-wider audience of the immoral injustice of a Jimcrow, segregated army.

TWO or three important and positive revelations are contained in the book which, however, are not entirely unknown. One is that a growing number of white rank and file soldiers are quite ready for the ending of discrimination and segregation against their

## by Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.

Negro brothers who are commingled with them in all the sacrifices of war. In other words, the War Department is responsible primarily for the policy of discrimination. Two is that Gen. Eisenhower has intervened on many occasions to give full and dignified recognition to Negro troops and to prevent outrageous miscarriages of justice against them.

Three is that there are six times as many Negro officers in the Army today than were in World War I, that they received non-Jimcrow officers' training on an equal plane with whites, and that Negro officers and men are giving an excellent account of themselves. But these and other positive factors are treated sort of parenthetically in the book without their interrelated significance being really grasped. Except for the traditional valor of Negro troops—demonstrated in all previous wars of the nation—these are all new factors, which ought to give rise to new and far-reaching conclusions.

* * *

IT IS about time, it seems to me, that Mr. White was saying something new about this whole question of Jimcrow in the light of new conditions, trends and developments in the world. Can it be, for example, that the most devastating war the world has ever seen could affect the whole gamut of human thought and action, and leave the struggle for Negro's citizenship untouched and unchanged? One would think from Mr. White's book—except for his reference to profound factors in the most casual manner—that hardly anything had happened from 1920 to 1945 so far as conditions and perspectives of the Negro's struggle are concerned.

Mr. White draws no conclusions from the Moscow, Cairo, Teheran and Crimea conference—and does not even mention them. Dumbarton Oaks, for this book, does not exist. Mr. White can agree as he wishes with these world-shaking events, but they certainly do exist and certainly do affect the struggle against discrimination. While Mr. White, at long last, recognizes the Soviet Union as a powerful force for racial equality, he immediately twists this into the concept of Russia building spheres of influence against England America and the United Nations in preparation for another war. Mr. White seems to be much more of a die-hard with regard to certain prewar misconceptions than, say, Mr. Churchill or some of America's biggest capitalists.

If Mr. White has any strong convictions about this war as a national liberation struggle—his book did not impress them upon his readers. Without such convictions, it's pretty hard to have much of a clear perspective for Negro rights or for the postwar world. It is a conspicuous void in a current book by such a leader as Mr. White that its strong moral plea against racial discrimination was not accompanied by an injunction to strengthen the profound inter-racial, inter-class currents which are moving unitedly over the world toward the destruction of the white supremacy myth wherever it may be operating.

11-1945 Sat. Review of Literature (New York City) JUL 28 1945



# Let My People Grow

*RIOTS AND RUINS. By A. Clayton Powell, Sr. New York: Richard R. Smith.* 1945. 171 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by H. A. OVERSTREET

HERE is a father of his people speaking to his people. Here is no cool, impersonal treatise. Here is Moses leading his people out of bondage—admonishing them, encouraging them, hurling his anger at the wayward ones for their abominations, hurling his bitterness at the pursuing hosts.

The Reverend A. Clayton Powell, Sr., Pastor Emeritus of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York, is a distinguished figure among the Negroes of the nation. Well on toward his eighties, his life has spanned the years of the rise of the Negro out of slavery to such measure of partial freedom as he now possesses.

In the long years of his fighting ministry he has learned the good and the bad of his own people; and he is as quick to rebuke and admonish the evil ones among his own race as he is to praise and encourage the good. In these same years, he has learned the good and the bad of the white people; and he is as quick to make generous acknowledgment of the good as he is to be hot with anger at the bad. Here, in short, is wise appraisal of a total society by a man who has sorrowed for his people and fought for them; who has suffered personal humiliation and found personal triumph; who has learned to know friend from foe; who has kept his humor but also his fury at injustice.

This book, however, is not simply a study of the race problem. It is a study that uses the race problem to highlight the conflict in our society between decency and hoodlumism. There are Negro hoodlums: this preacher is bitter with anger at the shame they bring to the decent ones of his race. But there are also white hoodlums: and he minces no words at the moral insensitivity of those white barbarians who humiliate and degrade his people.

Perhaps at no time in history has hoodlumism revealed itself so clearly as the ugly thing it is. Nazism raised hoodlumism into national policy. Hoodlumism is inconsiderateness turned into gloating practice. It is psychological and moral unawareness gone ruthless. It is the will to hurt. It is the human creature freed of the civilized controls of kindness and respect, riding roughshod over helpless life.

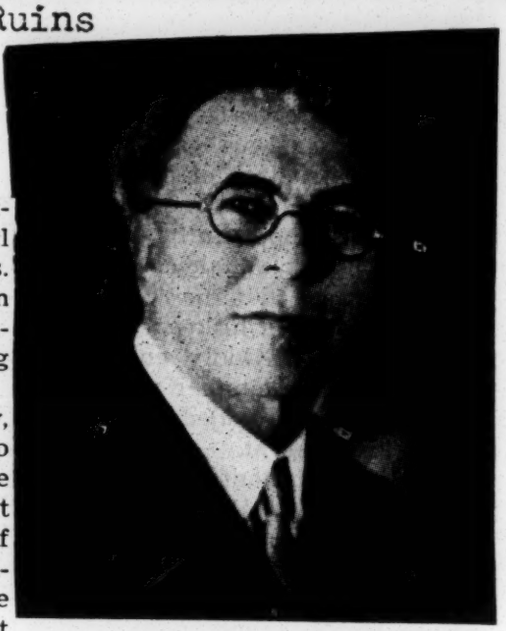
There may be those who sincerely, though mistakenly, believe the Negro to be so inferior to the white that he must be carefully segregated. But when such belief takes the form of deliberate insult, the face of the hoodlum appears. The bitter shame of the race situation in America is that it exhibits Americans hating and humiliating their fellow men.

This book has all logic on its side. "I know some Negroes that will steal a wheelbarrow and I also know some white men who will steal a railroad stretching from New York to Boston . . . The white man stole the forest lands of America from the Indians and then stole the Negroes from Africa and brought them here to clean up these forests. Now he talks about Negroes having no respect for life or property."

"We measure a race," he reminds us, "by the best, not the worst. The Americans are measured by George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and the Roosevelts, not by Al Capone and John Dillinger . . . Then, in the name of God and good logic, why not judge the Negro race by Booker T. Washington, George Washington Carver, and W. E. B. DuBois instead of by the submerged tenth that gives us the hoodlums, the muggers, and the murderers?"

The book has all logic on its side; but the tragic thing is that ignorance and hate know no logic. It is ignorance and hate that, in spite of the best reason we can marshall against them, create the hoodlumism in our midst.

Two features of this book should be of especial interest to those who care about removing the shame of racial inhumanity. The first is the penetrating analysis of the Harlem riot. The author, contrary to Mayor LaGuardia and the newspapers, shows the riot, in its inception, to have been a true



**A. Clayton Powell: "I know some Negroes who will steal a wheelbarrow . . . and some white men who will steal a railroad."**

race riot, born out of suppressed fury at long mistreatment and particularly at the indignities visited upon Negroes in the services. It was only later, the author shows, that it degenerated into an orgy of looting by the "submerged tenth." The author's description of the pent-up hatred of the Negroes for the whites should be read by every American who is anxious about the future of his country.

The second important feature is the hopeful account of movements that show, among decent people, an increase of awareness of the urgent nature of the race problem. Outstanding among these hopeful movements has been the uniting of the Methodist Episcopal Church—North and South. "The Methodist Episcopal Church South split from the parent body over the question of slavery in 1845. The Negro question held them apart until 1939 when the Methodists North and South were again united. The first General Conference of the merged bodies . . . was held in 1940 at Atlantic City. The Conference was interracial.

"Seven hundred and sixty-two delegates met in their second General Conference at Kansas City on May 5, 1944 and plunged directly into a realistic discussion of racial discrimination and segregation in the church. Before adjourning they had voted that Negroes should have equality in housing, transportation, and educational facilities. The delegates north and south, except a few diehards, also voted to appoint a committee looking toward the complete elimination of all racial discrimination at the next General Conference in 1948."

By contrast, the author recounts the disappointing history of Congress in relation to the Negro.

> Nationally (the Negro) is poorer politically today than he was fifty years ago. At that time . . . there were twenty-three Negro members of the United States Congress. These men were not ignorant, either, as some of the slanderers of the race have tried to make the public believe. They were graduates of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Oberlin. A few of them had studied in European universities . . . Not only have these great Negro national characters and their positions gone with the wind *but not a single bit of legislation to help the Negro in his fight for human rights has been enacted by Congress for fifty years* . . . Congress is a political drag . . . and is absolutely dedicated to the proposition—keep the Negro down.

There is passion in this book. It is a document which shows that the Negro is no longer content to take it lying down. Yet it is not merely a book of anger. It is full of wise and anxious counsel to the Negro people, as they make their slow but determined way out of bondage into democratic freedom.

NEW YORK CITY. "THE NATION"
- AUGUST 11, 1945

## Plain Talk

IN "RIOTS AND RUINS" by A. Clayton Powell, Sr. (Richard R. Smith, $2), one will find a good document on the changing attitude of the Negro toward his status in American life. Mr. Powell, formerly pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, has lived long and has had contacts with the masses of Negroes as well as with their leaders both in the North and in the South. Although he belongs among the older Negro leadership and writes somewhat in the tradition of Booker T. Washington, he does not accept "segregation with equal opportunities" as a solution of the race problem. In his homely philosophy, which reveals an acquaintance with recent literature on race relations, he criticizes Negroes for their inefficiency and thriftlessness as well as castigating whites for their inhumanity and hypocrisy. His discussion of the race problem is based upon his interpretation of the riot in Harlem in 1943 and to a lesser extent on the riot in Detroit. These outbreaks are interpreted as evidences of the resentment of Negroes against the accumulated grievances which they have suffered over the years in America. Mr. Powell utilizes many of his personal experiences to impress upon the reader the meaning of discrimination to the Negro. In the recital of these experiences, the author frankly admits his anger and hatred and does not use his sacred calling as a hypocritical camouflage for real feelings. The tone of the book is indicated in the following significant sentences: "The Negro used to be the most lovable, forgivable being in America, but the white man's prejudice, hatred, and lies have changed the Negro's psychology. He is just as full of hell, hatred, and lies as the white man."

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

## *NOT QUESTION OF 'SOCIAL EQUALITY'*

Detroit Free Press 8-12-45

**When we can decide that neither race in America possesses all the devils nor all the angels, we have made a long step toward reduction of a race friction which produces race riots and turns the wheels of civilization back toward barbarism, as it did in Detroit and New York."—From "Riots and Ruins" (Smith), by A. Clayton Powell, Sr., pastor emeritus of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, and father of Congressman A. Clayton Powell, Jr. Dr. Powell spent a couple of weeks in Detroit in 1944 to study the aftermath of the 1943 riot. He found the Southern migrants, white and colored, flaming with hatred, though 60 per cent of Detroit's colored population "enjoy a race relation with the majority of white citizens that is second only to that of Chicago and New York."**

**"In the working out of our misunderstanding, the patience of both races will be tried to the utmost. * * * 8-12-45**

**"We must be patient with those Negroes who hate all white men and with white men who despise all colored folks. * * ***

**" * * * When the Negro asks for equality he is not asking for social equality. It cannot be repeated too often that social equality is not a race but an individual question. * * *"**

11-1945 "They Seek A City"

# History Of Defender Related In New Book

Chicago Defender 6-23-45

*The intriguing story of how Robert S. Abbott established The Chicago Defender and built it into the most outstanding Negro newspaper in America is told in an exciting new book, "They Seek A City" by Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy. The following excerpts from the book are reprinted with the permission of the publisher, Doubleday, Doran & Co.*

By ARNA BONTEMPS and JACK CONROY

An out-of-town visitor who observed Colored American Day at the World's Fair in 1893 was Robert Sengstacke Abbott, almost twenty-three. As tenor of the Hampton Quartet, he had frequently toured the country. The young man listened to Frederick Douglass' speech and heard Ida B. Wells tell of the destruction of her Memphis newspaper by a mob. Abbott also was interested in journalism, and had been learning the printer's trade at Hampton Institute, Virginia.

Abbott enjoyed his World's Fair visit, and in 1897 returned to Chicago with the intention of staying. He was a fully qualified printer, but found that printing firms were reluctant to hire a Negro. He picked up odd jobs at his trade and took up the study of law in night classes at Kent College of Law, where his closest friend and counselor was Harry Dean, subsequently a sea captain and adventurer. Dean has recounted his somewhat astounding experiences in a book, "The Pedro Gorino," written in collaboration with Sterling North.

John R. Marshall (later Colonel Marshall of the Eighth Illinois Infantry), a Hampton graduate, was a Chicago brickmason, and to him Abbott brought a letter of recommendation from General Samuel C. Armstrong, founder of Hampton and at that time its principal. Marshall's circle of acquaintances was large and included many persons of prominence and authority. The young printer-lawyer benefited from his association with the popular brickmason. 6-23-45

**'Little Too Dark'**

Edward H. Morris, possibly Chicago's most successful Negro attorney of the period, told Abbott bluntly that he was "a little too dark to make any impressions on the court in Chicago," and advised a debut in a smaller town. The beginner displayed his hopeful shingle in near-by Gary, Ind., but it was almost totally ignored by the citizens of that steelmaking community.

Giving up his attempt to practice law, Abbott fell back upon his intermittent printing jobs. But he had another idea. The evening of May 6, 1905, found him peddling on the street and from door to door copies of a four-page paper, the Chicago Defender, bearing an arrogant subtitle, "The World's Greatest Weekly." The publisher was also editor, business manager, and entire staff. The editorial desk doubled as a kitchen table in the apartment of Mrs. Henrietta P. Lee on South State street. Mrs. Lee also proffered the use of her telephone, and the Western Newspaper Union, a printing company specializing in small country weeklies, was persuaded to extend as much as twenty-five dollars credit.

Abbott seldom was able to pay the full amount of the bill at once, but was forced to take out a portion of the edition, sell it, and then return with proceeds to bail out the remaining copies held in escrow by the printer. Abbott's friend Marshall had introduced him to a foreman in the Chicago Tribune engraving plant who arranged a month's credit for engravings. A night-club proprietor championed the venture, often depositing ten dollars in his cash register subject to the demand of the hard-pressed publisher and editor. When Abbott expressed worry over the obligation thus incurred, the slate was wiped clean by insertion of an advertisement. 6-23-45

**Gets Volunteers**

Though Abbott continued for some time as sole regular staff member, he enlisted a number of volunteers. Julius N. Avendorph, sports promoter and social figure, wrote about both fields of interest. Tony Langston, a bartender at the Keystone Club, took advantage of his position to gather news about frequenters of the establishment and other tidbits accessible to members of his profession. Alfred Anderson, manager of old Provident hospital, helped out with editorials, and Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams edited a health column. Recognizing the role of the barbershop as social center and forum, Abbott called on as many as he could reach to leave papers for sale and to collect items of news, comment, and criticism deposited by customers.

James A. Scott, subsequently appointed assistant states attorney, had suggested "Defender" as a suitable name for Abbott's new paper, since Negroes of Illinois and the nation were in critical need of a vigorous defender of their rights. A great many of the preceding and contemporary Negro papers had attached themselves to one or the other of the dominant political parties (usually Republican), and too often had subordinated the battle for justice and equality to political expediency. Abbott resolved to remain rigorously independent and to fight incessantly for Negro rights. His resolute adherence to this policy at length brought him more readers than any other "race" publisher.

ROBERT S. ABBOTT

One of Abbott's earliest competitors, the "Broad Ax" moved to Chicago from Salt Lake City in 1899. Julius C. Taylor, its editor and publisher, decorated each issue with numerous likenesses of politicians, who, it has been said, often enough lent the paper financial aid to escape the uncomplimentary comments of Taylor, who excelled in personal accusations and preach-baiting. His motto was: "Hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may." The editor was inclined to condemn ministers of the gospel who mixed politics with religion, and on one occasion said:

"The Negro race is the only race in the world to have their churches turned into political halls for faking preachers and the small-headed base white Republican politicians who contend that they can buy any 'darky' preacher and a whole church full of niggers for ten dollars." 6-23-45

**Hearst Makeup**

As a matter of policy, the "Broad Ax" favored the Democratic party, but expressed its willingness to print contributions from "Republicans, infidels, or anyone else . . . so long as their language is proper and the responsibility fixed." Aside from its pungent editorial style, the paper was notable as the first in Chicago to attack the tradition demanding of Negroes full and unquestioning loyalty to the Republican party. The "Broad Ax" ended its hectic career in 1927.

When the "Defender" outgrew the facilities of the Western Newspaper Union, Abbott made a printing arrangement with the Chicago "Daily Drover's Journal." A composing-room foreman who had worked for the Hearst press persuaded him that his make-up should be more sensational and eye-arresting. Abbott agreed, and before long was being called "the Williams Randolph Hearst of Negro journalism." It was rumored widely that the paper actually belonged to Hearst.

The Defender cartoonist had designed a masthead so similar to that of the Chicago "Evening American" that hurried newsstand purchasers often mistook one paper for the other to the disadvantage of the dealer, since the Defender sold for five cents and the "Evening American" for two. The Hearst paper filed suit for infringement of copyright, but Abbott forestalled the action by changing the masthead. 6-23-45

**Bible of Negro South**

The Defender achieved national

prominence with its vigorous advocacy of the Negro exodus from the South beginning with World War I. Circulation leaped, and Abbott added pages and various improvements. He cultivated a homely, direct style of expression, never "talking down" to his readers, and demanded that his writers follow this policy. The paper became the "bible" and inspiration of black Southerners yearning toward the New Canaan, and the "defender" indeed of those already in the North.

Beneath the slogan, "American Race Prejudice Must Be Destroyed," every edition of the Defender emphasized these points:

"The opening up of all trades and trade unions to blacks as well as whites. Representation in the President's cabinet. Engineers, firemen, and conductors of all American railroads and government-controlled industries.

"Representation in all departments of the police forces over the entire United States.

"Government schools open to all American citizens.

"Motormen and conductors on surface, elevated, and motor bus lines throughout America."

During the race riots of 1919 the "Daily Drover's Journal," fearing mob violence, refused to print the Defender, and Abbott was forced to bargain with the Gary Tribune, whose small presses required two days to turn out an edition of 150,000. Impressed with the desirability of owning his own plant, Abbott moved a year later into his own building on Indiana avenue where printing equipment valued at more than $500,000 now turns out the paper. 6-23-45

**Biggest Circulation**

Before Abbott died in 1940, after an illness lasting eight years, he had the satisfaction of seeing his "World's Greatest Weekly" attain a circulation larger than that of any other Negro paper. During the great migration, a record of 500,000 is said to have been reached, and a consistently high figure has been maintained.

Since the founder's death, the Defender has been managed by a board of directors, including John H. Sengstacke, Abbott's nephew; Dr. Metz T. P. Lochard, editor-in-chief; and James P. Cashin, an attorney. The militance fostered by Robert Sengstacke Abbott is little diminished, and readers were being exhorted for some time after the United States entered World War II to "Remember Pearl Harbor, and Sikeston too," the latter reference being to a particularly brutal lynching in Missouri.

The Defender, however, has broadened its outlook and now vigorously attacks all form of racial intolerance, including anti-Semitism. Its avowed policy, of course, always dictated such a course, but for a long time the emphasis was solely upon anti-Negro manifestations. An example of the Defender's catholicity is provided by a glance at the roster of columnists appearing in the paper. There are: W. E. B. Du Bois, elder statesman among Negro leaders; Langston Hughes, Negro poet with Indian blood; S. I. Hayakawa, author of "Language in Action," a Japanese-American; Earl Conrad, a white New Yorker; Walter White, veteran foe of lynching, whose investigation often has been facilitated by the fact that he can easily be mistaken for a white man; Ben Burns, white Northerner; and Lucius Harper, one of the last remaining links with the Defender of the early days.

## To the North

The nation

THE MIGRATIONS OF NEGROES from the South to Northern cities have been the subject of numerous scientific social studies. But it has remained for Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy in "They Seek a City" (Doubleday, Doran, $2.75) to describe the dramatic aspects of these movements in terms of the personal experiences of the pioneers. Beginning with the story of Du Sable, the French Negro who built his hut at the mouth of the Chicago River in 1779, the authors trace the colorful careers of Negroes, both slave and free, who sought freedom in the West, and more particularly in the Midwest. In these pages one will meet John Jones, a free Negro of North Carolina, who amassed a fortune in Chicago and was a friend of John Brown. Here one will find the dramatic story of "Pap" Singleton and the "Exodusters" whom he led to Kansas. There is an especially colorful account of prominent leaders, such as Frederick Douglass, and of others who later became prominent, such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the poet, and Will Marion Cook, the composer, who met at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. There are the stories of the black troubadours who gave America the blues, and the romantic story of Adah Menken, the mulatto from New Orleans, who became the mistress of Dumas *père*. The accounts of the early attempts of the Negro to gain a foothold in Northern industries around the opening of the century and of the violence which resulted will enable the reader to view in proper perspective the present situation of the Negro in the North. When the authors come to the mass migrations beginning with the First World War, their account loses much of its drama because individuals do not stand out. Here the story is more concerned with issues and problems. Nevertheless, the book is unique and should be read by anyone who would gain a knowledge of the human meaning of the northward migrations. 10-20-45

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

# Springfield Blueprints Practical Democracy

The Richmond Times-Dispatch Richmond, Virginia

## Massachusetts City Moves to Awaken Responsibilities of Citizenship

9-23-45

THE STORY OF THE SPRINGFIELD PLAN, by Clarence J. Chatto and Alice L. Halligan. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc. $2.75. 201 pp.

*Reviewed by*
Elizabeth W. Matthews

THE publication of the successful and dramatic story of "one community's total war against prejudice" comes at a particularly good time, for with the burdens of war lifted from their hearts and minds, thoughtful American people will be turning with grateful hearts to the task of building a permanent world peace. "The Story of the Springfield Plan" is a blueprint for the foundations of such a peace, for it must be begun in the villages and cities throughout the land.

The city of Springfield, with its large industrial population representing many races and economic levels, provided ideal conditions for this grand experiment in practical democracy, but in that way it was precisely like nearly any other locality. The things that sets Springfield apart is that everyone has co-operated to make democracy a way of life, and not an hypothetical ideal. For the past five years the schools, newspapers, radio and ordinary citizens of Springfield have participated in an organized effort to develop their population into a city of good neighbors. The program is flexible and undergoes constant change and improvement, but the progress which has been made in five years is thrilling. Where there was intolerance and prejudice before, there now exist understanding of other cultural and religious backgrounds, appreciation of foreign achievements, and over all, a knowledge of what the authors properly call "The American Plan."

The program has its foundation in the schools, and correctly so, for the elementary and secondary school years are most important in preparing the average American child for adult life. It is only natural that a plan so unusual as that in Springfield would need new methods of teaching. These have been devised by superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, members of school boards, and other citizens, including industrialists and labor union representatives, working together. Teachers are considered to be of primary importance in teaching and practicing democracy, and they are selected on the basis of ability and character, with all races and religions represented on the faculties. In addition, teachers are required to teach different subjects and classes from time to time, and are encouraged to take higher degrees by a system of promotions according to merit.

From kindergarten through senior high school, children study and work and play with others of every race and creed. But the matter does not end there. Whenever a question arises about a particular religion or nationality, it is answered fully and frankly to the satisfaction of the entire group. The Springfield plan has been most successful in teaching appreciation of the other fellow's achievements and rights, regardless of his origin. The authors quote Eric Johnston for one of their slogans, "We're all in business together."

If the Springfield plan began and ended in the school, it would still be a magnificent achievement, but it would not be the success and the inspiration that it is. The leaders of the program realized from the first that the entire community must be not only interested, but actively cooperating if the plan were to benefit all the people. Skillful planning and leadership have accomplished wonders in bringing parents, as well as children, to a larger responsibility as citizens of a democracy. There are special classes for adults, for those who wish to learn to speak English those who wish to improve their mechanical skills in order to obtain better jobs, and those who wish to learn to make slip covers. Regular concerts are only one of the ways in which people are brought together.

"The Story of the Springfield Plan" may be the means of encouraging teachers and superintendents to begin similar programs in their own schools, but its greatest contribution to the average citizen will be an awakened sense of the responsibilities and privileges of American citizenship, and a determination to do all in his power to "build a community on the American principle of friendship and freedom of opportunity." All of the people, working together, can achieve the democracy of our ideals.

# Mass. Court Sticks By a Bad Tradition

Daily Worker New York 9-20-45

**by Samuel Sillen**

IN MARCH, 1944, a Boston book dealer named Abraham Eisenstadt sold a copy of Lillian Smith's **Strange Fruit** to Bernard De Voto, the literary critic. For this apparently innocent transaction, Mr. Eisenstadt was fined $200. Judge Edward F. Hanify found him "guilty of possessing an obscene book with intent to sell and selling an obscene book."

Since that time, Miss Smith's novel about racial conflict in the South has been sold by other book dealers to more than half a million Americans. The bookshelves of the land are bulging with obscenity.

But virtue triumphed this week when the Massachusetts Supreme Court in a six-to-one decision upheld the $200 fine on Mr. Eisenstadt. The court has persuaded itself that the book "contains much that even in this post-Victorian era would tend to promote lascivious thoughts and to arouse lustful desire in the minds of substantial numbers of the public into whose hands this book, obviously intended for sale, is likely to fall."

That the book is intended for sale is indeed obvious. That it arouses "lustful desire" is a confession by the court which is, I fear, indiscreet, even in this post-Victorian era. Hundreds of thousands of readers will wag their fingers at this robed impropriety.

* * *

EVEN the Massachusetts Supreme Court concedes that **Strange Fruit** is a "serious work" with "literary merit" and a "permissible theme." It objects, however, to the fact that the story is not handled with the decorum of George Eliot's **Adam Bede** "which we believe is universally recognized as an English classic."

This smug reference to the universally recognized classics is perhaps the most ludicrous aspect of the court's decision. For the Boston super-snoopers have a record without rival in dealing with classics. 9-20-45

In 1929, the Boston authorities swept out 68 "obscene" books in an all-out civic virtue drive. One of these "obscene" boooks was V. I. Lenin's **State and Revolution.** The others included Upton Sinclair's **Oil,** Theodore Dreiser's **An American Tragedy,** H. G. Wells' **The World of William Clissold,** Lion Feuchtwanger's **Power** and books by Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Aldous Huxley and Ernest Hemingway.

As for George Eliot's **Adam Bede,** the fact is that this "universally recognized classic" shocked the pinafores off the Victorian self-ordained censors, and it was fortunate for the author that she used a masculine pen name. Flaubert's **Madame Bovary** got its author into a messy court trial. Charlotte Bronte's **Jane Eyre** and Thomas Hardy's **Jude the Obscure** were the scandals of their day.

Classics? Before 1930 American customs inspectors banned the entry of such roaring obscenities as Aristophanes' **Lysistrata,** Ovid's **Art of Love, The Arabian Nights,** Voltaire's **Candide,** the **Letters of Abelard and Heloise,** Defoe's **Moll Flanders** and the works of Rabelais and Rousseau, Boccaccio and Balzac.

* * *

THE truth is that reams of really pornographic trash get by, but serious work dealing honestly with the facts of human experience constantly gets the axe. And we in New York have little reason to sneer at Boston in this respect. Only this past year an adult play **Trio** was banned on Broadway and, despite protests, it stayed banned.

There is no objection in principle to a fair jury trial which deals with books and plays that are accused of corrupting the morals of the community. No responsible person wants to make a brief for books which are clearly intended to appeal to an audience on the basis of obscenity alone.

But experience has proved that such verdicts cannot be left to a license commissioner or to a judge. And when you can ban Lenin's **State and Revolution** as "obscene" it is self-evident what dictatorial censorship statutes can accomplish. 9-20-45

The judges of the Massachusetts Supreme Court ought to recite every morning before breakfast the words of John Milton in Areopagitica: "Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopolized and traded in by tickets, and statutes, and standards. We must not think to make a staple commodity of all the knowledge in the land, to mark and license it like our broadcloth and our woolpacks.

"Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach; for if we be so jealous over them, as that we dare not trust them with an English pamphlet, what do we but censure them for a giddy, vicious and ungrounded people; in such a weak state of faith and discretion, as to be able to take nothing down but through the pipe of a licenser."

11-1945

Strange Fruit- Lillian Smith

# "Strange Fruit" Author Hits Ban

Atlanta World

COLUMBUS, Ga.— (ANP)— Expressing her stand against prejudice in her usual outspoken manner, Lillian Smith, author of the sensational novel, 'Strange Fruit," last week blasted the motion picture industry as an enterprise without courage. Basing her convictions on the recent anti-Negro ban of "Brewsters' Millions" in Memphis because Rochester's importance was too much in evidence, Miss Smith said that such an act merely tends "to feed racial bias."

4-22-45

"Certainly the motion picture industry is strong enough not to be dominated by the feelings of the south, she said, "and we of the south find it much easier to maintain our cancerous attitude toward Negroes when the people of the rest of the nation allow the producers to cater to our feelings.

"I am for human beings and I think it would be a good idea if Hollywood would occasionally direct itself with vigor on behalf of human beings, and strop cringing in fear of the 20 per cent of the violently southern lunatic fringe. Even if that 20 per cent stayed away in protest, the other 80 per cent would continue to make for a profitable box office."

## Lillian Smith Cited

Commercial Appeal Memphis Tenn.

NEW YORK, March 14.—(AP)— Lillian Smith of Clayton, Ga., who wrote the controversial anti-best selling novel, "Strange Fruit," was presented the 1945 Constance Lindsay Skinner Award of the Women's National Book Association. Presentation of the award was made here yesterday.

4-1-45

## Skinner Award To Go To Georgia Novelist

Atlanta Constitution

NEW YORK, March 14.—(AP)— Lillian Smith, of Clayton, Ga., author of the novel "Strange Fruit," will receive the 1945 Constance Lindsay Skinner award of the Women's National Book Association, it was announced today. Presentation will be made here March 23.

3-15-45

# BETWEEN The LINES

Journal & Guide

"Strange Fruit" Disgrace

By GORDON B. HANCOCK

IT IS difficult to imagine a more subtle yet scathing indictment against the Negro race in general, and Negro womanhood in particular, than that presented in **Strange Fruit** by Lillian Smith. If it is staged and filmed as proposed, it will become an effective complement to **The Birth of A Nation** by Thomas Dixon. In any case it will do irreparable damage to the cause of race relations, and postpone further the already too indefinitely postponed better era of the Negro's full integration into American life.

DR. HANCOCK

Whereas **The Birth of A Nation** made a flagrant indictment against the "big burly" type of Negro, the **Strange Fruit** indictment is against the educated Negro, the last hope of the Negro race. When Miss Smith portrays in Nonnie Anderson, a young Negro woman college graduate, no higher ambitions than to be the mistress and concubine of a dissolute poor white man, she stabs at the very heart of the hopes of the Negro race. When she makes a young Negro physician, Sam Perry, willing to take the cast-off concubine of the said poor white man, she makes doubly sure her contempt for the possibilities which we hoped inhered in the education of the Negro race.

7-21-45

Being a novel set in the postwar period of World War I, it becomes particularly dangerous as we enter the postwar period of World War II. This treatment of the Negro-white relations in the South will serve as a mighty hyperdermic to rally the old South which some of us were optimistic enough to imagine weakening in the last agony of death. If Hitler died without reading **Strange Fruit** he missed what to him would have been a rare treat, so thoroughly did it dovetail with his notion of Negroes and master-racism.

The very popularity of **Strange Fruit** is in itself ominous! This popularity largely hinges about the fact that the Negro is cast in a subservient role with no possibilities for a higher level. Nonnie Anderson becomes a symbol of the educated Negro woman and when such a woman prefers a life of domestic service and concubinage with a poor white man to the larger life offered in service to her race, she presents a sad commentary on the wisdom of those who seek larger educational opportunities for Negroes.

No less sad is the commentary offered in the readiness with which an outstanding Negro physician is willing to take unto wife the cast-off of a white dissolute. The whole portrayal of the Negro principles is misrepresentative in the highest degree.

7-21-45

In the first place, the typical Negro concubine of the old South spurned poor white men who had nothing to offer but a "scandalized" name. The more favorable position of the mulatto of the South is further proof of this fact. The only explanation that the mulattoes were generally educated first among the Negroes and became economically secure inheres in the fact that their white antecedents were whites of wealth and affluence who gave them a start. Among the poor whites, cases of bastardy and incest were far more common than concubinage with Negro women. I know not one case of a Negro professional taking to wife of the cast-off concubine of a dissolute white man.

Nonnie Anderson and Sam Perry are not typical Negroes of today. Any implication that education does not elevate the ambitions of Negroes is damnable and **Strange Fruit** makes such implication. The **book is one unrelieved picture of the sordidness of Negro life and** morals. The Negro is now becoming a literary "guinea pig" even as he has long since been a "guinea pig" for the social scientists, with their "studies" and "researches" and "investigations."

Unfortunately better race relations must wait until writers are found who are quite as willing to peddle Negro virtues as they are to peddle his profanities, his vulgarisms, and his sexual peculations. Negro novels are always "best sellers," for the Negro typifies the murderers and rapists and rogues and rascals that the American readers are always hungry to hear about.

* * * *

**This role of the Negro confirms** preconceptions and prejudices and perpetuates popular misrepresentations and the very fact that this is so popular is one of the saddest commentaries on the intelligence and religion of this nation. Any trap set and baited with profanity, vulgarity, and blasphemies almost always catch the American readers in large numbers. **Strange Fruit** is no exception.

Taking her cue from Richard Wright, Miss Smith very awkwardly injects unnecessarily profanities and vulgarisms. The book disparages the Negro race and blasphemes Negro womanhood; it plays into the hands of the master-racists and quite conceivably heartens Bilbo, Rankin, and Eastland who no doubt would feel pleased and highly flattered to have autographed "pocket editions."

7-21-45

It is difficult to harmonize the Lillian Smith, editor of **The South Today**, and the Lillian Smith, author of **Strange Fruit**. It is a minor calamity when her pronounced literary powers are sacrificed on the altars of this country's moral and intellectual depravity. There is something radically wrong with the Negro who does not resent **Strange Fruit**.

# That Man Lauds Decision Against "Strange Fruit"

The Philadelphia Tribune

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 9-29-45

(NNPA News Service)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. —Senator Theodore G. (The Man) Bilbo, Democrat, of Mississippi, is pleased with the decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court upholding the conviction of a Cambridge (Massachusetts) book store proprietor for selling "Strange Fruit," the tragic novel of illicit love of a white man and a colored woman in the deep South.

The Massachusetts court found the book to be obscene, indecent, and impure. A dissenting opinion by Justice Henry T. Lummons asserted that while the majority opinion seemed to construe the statute rightly, he did not believe the evidence warranted a finding of guilty.

Six other justices upheld the action of Judge Edward P. Hanify, who found Abraham A. Eisentadt guilty of possessing an obscene book with intent to sell and selling an obscene book. He was fined $100 on each of the two counts on December 4. His sale of the book was made for a test case.

Congratulating the Massachusetts court, Bilbo referred to the author, Miss Lillian Smith, as "that strange-minded lady of the deep South."

He said: "It is regrettable that hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of the pure-minded white people of America—men, women, boys, and girls—have already been polluted and corrupted by the reading of this dirty and obscene book, which is an indictment against the South, a gross misrepresentation of facts, and a puny attempt to integrate the American Negro into the social life of the white people.

"The only other book which is worse is Black Boy, by Richard Wright, a Negro who is living in New York with a white wife.

"Of course, it is a well-known fact that Miss Lillian Smith, the author of Strange Fruit, is the idol—the pin-up girl—of every Negro organization in the United States that is seeking social equality with the white race. With a few exceptions the right-minded and decent-minded white people of America who have any regard for the integrity of the blood of the white race have absolutely no respect for her."

What Bilbo does not realize is that a great many colored people did not relish the portrayal of an intelligent colored girl of good family having a clendestine relationship with the son of a decadent white family.

# "Strange Fruit" Concluded

When I closed by review of "Strange Fruit" by Lillian Smith with the statement "There is something radically wrong with the Negro who does not resent "Strange Fruit," I meant no offense. Wherein the statement gave offense I gladly apologize; not because I feel that many took the statement seriously, but because I do not wish that quibbling over common courtesy should cause us to lose sight of the more fundamental question as to whether "Strange Fruit" offers a just portrayal of the Negro, the educated Negro and the Negro woman.

This is the fundamental question that challenges Negroes and friends of their advance. The statement above that gave some offense was just one of those trite, facetious and hyperbolical colloqualisms which are too patently absurd to be taken seriously.

**FILMING INFLUENCE**

Now let us get along with the matter of the publication. Strange Fruit, which if filmed and staged as proposed, is going to have a tremendous influence on the matter of race relations in this country and possibly the world Novels are power ful things! It took Uncle Tom's Cabin, a novel, to break the backbone of slavery. It took The Birth of A Nation, a novel, to solidify, it seems forever, the solid south. It has been argued in refutation of my thesis, that Nonnie Anderson and Dr. Sam Perry, principals in Strange Fruit story, are just two individual Negro characters and not representatives of a type.

I would like to ask all who take that position just one question, namely, since when did America and the world begin to think of Negroes in terms of individuals? When the Negroes are this appraised, the color question will have been solved The great fight that Negroes are making is the fight to be appraised not typically, but individually. If we are fighting for this fine consummation why should we assume that we have attained unto it?

There are some whites north and south who try hard to see the Negro as an individual, but these are in a woeful minority. The masses of whites see in each Negro, however pathetic his lot, the whole Negro race because the underprivileged is in great majority. No, the prevailing belief among whites is that Negro men are dying to intermarry with white women and that Negro women are willing to have white men under any conditions. THIS IS NOT TRUE OF NEGROES and that is my objection to "Strange Fruit!" It reaffirms this false assumption and herein lies its possibility of damage to race relations

**FAIL TO NOTE PRIDE**

Negroes have pride that makes them proud of their own race, but if this pride is anywhere given place in Strange Fruit I failed to note it. The educated Negroes have not stamped to marry white, in spite of the prevailing assumption that's their highest ambition by the masses of unthinking whites who will take their cue from Birth of a Nation and Strange Fruit rather than from science and history.

Here is what an upstanding young Negro wrote me recently: "I was surprised to learn that Miss Smith knows so little about the Negro and I was shocked at the gusto with which this ignorance was swallowed by so many of our "best minds." But a letter from a southern white woman who well belongs to the literati of the south sets forth what some whites think of Strange Fruit and its implications. The letter reads in part: "The presentation of educated Negro that the book (Strange Fruit) gives has shocked me. Then when the Negro Press appeared to be unanimous in their enthusiastic reception of both book and author I was astonished

**TRUE PICTURE:**

"I have heard several persons (white of course) remark that Nonnie was a true picture of the Negro woman both as to morality and in her desire to have a white man under any condition. Education made no difference. When I have attempted to refute the statement, I have been asked whether Negroes objected to the book. This always silenced me. Yours is the first adverse statement that I have seen, and I read five Negro newspapers. I recall statements made to me and from the platform by Mrs. Moton, Mrs. Wilkerson, Miss Burroughs and Mrs. Charlotte Hawkins Brown not long ago and a speech of Mrs. Washington.

"Other Negro women in the south, not known outside of their own states, had insisted that resectable, educated and cultured Negro women not only held themselves above reproach but any one who departed from standards of morality, especially with white men, were ostracized. Knowing them well except Mrs. Washington, I believe them and still do. But why, of why, has not a single Negro woman nor a Negro man, except you, challenged the book, and why have all accepted the book without question and with apparent approval?

Irrespective of the high motives Miss Smith may have had in writing Strange Fruit, its characterization of the educated Negro in general and the educated Negro woman in particular is damaging to the integrity of the Negro race. Instead of breaking the chains which hold us in traditional thrall, I fear that it will forge stronger chains about the hopless Negro as he struggles for deliverance. I resent the implications of Strange Fruit. Insulted, we have great assurance Negroes stubbornly refused to be in that there are those to lay it on."

# "Strange Fruit" Ban Stirs Up Odd Ripples

9-23-45

## Boston Herald's Book Fair Loses Out, But Kicks About It

*Special Correspondence*

BOSTON, Sept. 22.—This week's decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court upholding Boston's ban on Lillian Smith's best seller, *Strange Fruit*, has had strange and ironic reverberations in the publishing world.

Following release of the decision holding that the novel was "obscene, indecent, and impure," New York publisher Alfred Knopf, Jr., wired the director of the Boston *Herald's* Book Fair (held each October) that, because of the "unbelievably shocking opinion" of the court, his firm was withdrawing its customary quota of new books to the Fair. 9-23-45

Literary circles here, however, feel that Knopf's boycotting of the Fair is unjustified. They point out that the *Herald*, while recognized as the Bible of New England big business, and ultra-conservative politically, has been relatively outspoken — more so than any other Boston daily—on the issues of literary and theatrical censorship.

### Spoke Last Year

Miss Smith addressed last year's Book Fair at the invitation of its program director, Mrs. Alice Dixon Bond. The author of *Strange Fruit* was heard by an overflow crowd at Symphony Hall and entertained by Greater Boston liberal groups which supported the Cambridge bookseller who sold a copy of her novel to the critic-editor Bernard DeVoto to set the stage for the test case on censorship.

*Herald* Book Fair officials said "Knopf has misfired. He's hitting at the people who've been on his side."

In the meantime, City Censor

sary; that if any sort of machinery had to be set up or a policy arrived at to supplement collective bargaining, it could better be done by labor and management at the conference called by Labor Secretary Schwellenbach for Nov. 5.

### Hopeful on Conference

Both the CIO and AFL are hopeful that "something" will come out of that conference, but they want to make it quite plain that this "something" will not be a renewal of labor's wartime no-strike pledge or the creation of machinery for handling labor disputes similar to that of the War Labor Board.

Labor circles here feel that the best way of assuring the success of the Labor - Management Conference would be for President Truman to issue a statement saying that labor is entitled to a substantial wage increase to compensate for the 30 per cent loss in wages workers have suffered since the end of the war and for increased productivity of workers.

"The workers not only are entitled to this increase; they were, in effect, promised it," one labor man said. He referred to the study submitted to the late President Roosevelt by a committee appointed by him to find out whether

tremendous influence on the matter of race relations in this country and possibly the world Novels are power ful things! It took Uncle Tom's Cabin, a novel, to break the backbone of slavery. It took The Birth of A Nation, a novel, to solidify, it seems forever, the solid south. It has been argued in refutation of my thesis, that Nonnie Anderson and Dr. Sam Perry, principals in Strange Fruit story, are just two individual Negro characters and not representatives of a type.

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# BETWEEN THE LINES

Atlanta Daily World

Ga.

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# About Books

N.Y. Amsterdam News 3-31-45

By CONSTANCE H. CURTIS

**The Ugly Head of Prejudice**

*SWING LOW. by Edwin A. Peeples. Houghton Mifflin, 293 pp. $2.50.*

Swing Low is a difficult novel to review. Prejudice against the book rears its ugly head on the first page, with the use of the word Negro with a little "n" and continues as the book progresses with a series of stereotypes of Southern Negroes, their way of life and the use of the word "negress." The book lends itself to a vitriolic review.

There are mitigating circumstances, however, in this story of the lives of Willie Mack and his Amy as they struggle for existence in the slums of Atlanta. For all of the surface prejudice, there is a reaching toward truth in the novel which will not allow its author to be termed mere "prejudiced white."

The author, Edwin Peeples, is a Southern product, a graduate of the Georgia School of Technology. He has lived in and knows his Southland well, though perhaps, as for most whites, there is unreality in his interpretation of the Negroes in his book. Though he knows their language and writes it well, he does not know their minds. From that he has been shut out.

**Chains of Jim Crow**

In the whole of his book, there is not one Negro who expresses an intelligent opposition to discrimination. Present are the meek and the ignorant, beaten down by the chains of jim crow, and the harshly belligerent, who murder in the dark—but no other. Willie Mack is just the stereotyped "good Negro," working hard for little pay and less pleasure, accepting the system, and "solving" his problem by returning to the farmlands which are his home. 3-31-45

Such a solution to the problem of the city Negro in the South is weak and untenable. Perhaps Mr. Peeples has never visited a plantation, never gotten a chance to see the scrabbling, little lives which are the fate of the sharecropper, the tenant farmer, the beaten, bewildered little man. If he had seen these things he would not send Willie Mack back to the land. There is no answer there.

**In Spite of Weakness**

In spite of these weaknesses, the author emerges in his book as a person who is trying to reach toward an understanding of his section. He has not glossed over the twisted meanness of the poor white who baits Negroes "just" for the hell of it" and because of his own misery. Neither has he overlooked the fact that the conditions in which Negroes live—the dirt and squalor—are not because of their desires, but rather because of the system. His novel pictures, too, the white who tries to help, who appeals to the law for the redress of the Negroes' wrongs, and finds that there is no justice in Georgia.

Mr. Peeples' name must be added to the growing list of those young Southern writers who are revolting at the inhumanity and unfairness of the Negroes' treatment in their homes. His book is important because it is obviously the work of a man who is not yet liberated from all of the little prejudices which are bred in the bones of the South, but who still fights against them and has a feeling for what is just and unjust. 3-31-45

**Salvation of the South**

In reading such a book one begins to believe that the salvation of the South will really come from its own people. Not those who are violent in their liberalism (they are only the leaders) but rather those who feel their souls decaying under the burden of the hate thrust on them. He emerges as one of the multitude which has begun to stir there.

**Swing Low** is not a really good book, but it is an indication of a moving forward, of a revolt on the part of those who have in the past merely accepted. For that reason it is important. It sounds the call of things to come.

# About Books

AERO-AMERICAN

By ETHEL L. WILLIAMS

SWING LOW, by Edwin Peeples. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Company, PP. 296, $2.50, 1945.

Willy Mack and his wife, Amy, came to Atlanta's Billiard Alley from the Georgia fields because Amy, city-born, didn't like the country. She wanted what the city had to offer, its bustle, its opportunity to make money, the companionship, news, and noise and comforts.

Willy was a good man, trusting and naive. He hadn't wanted to live in the city. He liked to plant cotton and hoe potatoes.

**Sordid Slums**

Billiard Alley, where Willy and Amy settled, was in Atlanta's slum district, similar to DuBose Heyward's "Catfish Row," only more sordid, the shacks more tumbled-down, more full of poverty and lawlessness. 4-21-45

Here Willy innocently managed to become a part of the violence and to know Sugar Flo, the owner of the brothel; Joe Sluefoot, the dapper "ladies' man" who lived by his wit;

Brother Hickerson, who in spite of all made a good life for himself and family by supplementing his earnings from selling junk, by raising chickens and rabbits and growing a vegetable garden on a dump; and "Mister Jim," Willy Mack's white boss, who tried in vain to win justice for him in the courts when he was shot by Hadley, a white mechanic and chief trouble-maker in Billiard Alley.

It was not until Amy was threatened by the police when caught selling whisky, and Willy Mack's salary had been garnished by the finance company that Amy consented to return to the farm.

**No Loud Approval**

"Swing Low" will probably not call forth any loud clamor of approval. Indeed many will resent it unless they bear in mind that the author is not delivering a lecture on conditions as they should be but, rather is recording the brutality and horror of life in a section of the South as he, a white Southerner, has observed it.

One is ever conscious that Mr. Peeples is deeply serious and is conscientiously trying to show how terrible this particular world is to the people who have to live in it and how they are victims of destructive forces within and without. Yet, one is also aware that he has failed in this, his first novel. 4-21-45

Lack of warmth, of humor and the author's ability to arouse suspense and excitement in his narrative keep it from reaching the status of greatness that the publishers claim for it. It is likely that most will agree that it is exceedingly dull reading.

# Negro Finds Race Pressure Greater Among City People

Chicago Sunday Tribune

*"SWING LOW," by Edwin A. Peeples. [Houghton Mifflin, $2.50.]*

**Reviewed by Robert Penn Warren**

This is the story of a "good country Negro" who comes to town from a plantation in south Georgia to Billiard Hollow in Atlanta. Willy Mack is plunged into new confusions, violences, temptations, depravities, and excitements, and confronts in the city a new pressure and vindictiveness in the racial conflict, but thru all of his experiences retains an innocence and warmth and carries his hope of persuading his wife to go back to the country. In the end, his wife, who has brought him to the city, sees the error of her ways, and with the baby, a son of Willy by another woman, in her arms, goes with Willy back to the simple life they had left. 4-15-45

The book invites two lines of discussion. First, it can be said that the author shows a considerable natural talent for fiction. He can pace a story well, he has a good ear and eye, he can draw a character in the large, as in the case of his hero, and in the small, as in the case of several of the minor portrait sketches, and he can, at times, write with sensitivity and feeling. At the same time, his plotting is sometimes careless and preposterous; episodes and scenes quite good and credible in themselves are flung together without rhyme or reason. The result is sometimes stagey, which occasionally is hard to take seriously, as in the end of the novel.

Edwin Peeples

Second, the book may be regarded as a social document. The approach here is different from that of either "Strange Fruit" or "The Winds of Fear," both of which focus the race issue on one basic, violent situation. "Swing Low," however, is more concerned with the general context—and tho the violent action of the story does concern the race issue, the effectiveness of this book lies in the sense of cramp, and slow, unrelenting pressure.

Another difference, and an advantage, lies in the fact that it gives a credible Negro character drawn full scale. But the trouble is that the reader is never quite sure what the author means by Willy Mack, or by Willy Mack's dream of the country. For instance, we know, and Mr. Peeples ought to know if he doesn't, that things aren't quite as simple as good country and bad city. The reader cannot be quite sure where Willy Mack leaves off and Mr. Peeples begins.

# NEW BOOK NEWS

Atlanta Constitution

## By John E. Drewry

2-18-45 6a.

**Dean, Henry W. Grady School of Journalism, University of Georgia.**

**ANOTHER ATLANTAN** has written a novel. This time it is Edwin Peeples and the book is **"Swing Low"** (Houston, Mifflin), scheduled for March publication.

Member of a well-known Atlanta family, Mr. Peeples is a Georgia Tech graduate (1936). He has done advertising work, written radio scripts, run a chemical corporation, and for the past two years has been connected with the office of Chief of Ordnance in Philadelphia.

**"Swing Low"** is a first novel and, according to the publishers, "is not just another racial book, but a genuine, human testament." The publishers have provided the following advance description of the story: 2-18-45

"Willy Mack came up to Atlanta still lonesome for the cane and mint and the cotton, the smell of plantation mules in the sun, the blackberries, the slow running creeks and the quail rocketting from the broomstraw. Amy, his big motherly wife, was a city Negro and wanted its bustle, its opportunity for money, companionship, news, noise and comforts. A man of conviction and justice, Willy loved his people and respected the white man though he was aware of the conflicting virtures and vices of each. Varied and vivid characters animate Willy's exile in Atlanta—Sugar Flo, the caramel-faced owner of a brothel; Hotcake, who paid the devil for his dance; the Rev. Jackson who tried to lift Billiard Alley into the light; Mr. Jim, Willy's white boss and campaigner for the Negro cause; Mr. Hadley, the nigger hater, who used the Negro and ruined him with malice and vengeance. It is a story of a black man's fight for decency. Willy Mack, the country Negro, earned the respect of white and black alike. Religious, ambitious, simple and passionate."

11-1945 Bibliography Swing Low by Peoples

# Color and the South

SWING LOW, *by Edwin A. Peeples. Houghton Mifflin. $2.50.*

BORDER CITY, *by Hart Stilwell. Doubleday Doran. $2.50.*

New Masses

THESE two talented first novels continue our guilty attention, sharpened recently by *Strange Fruit* and *Black Boy*, to the crucial question of race relations. Both are by native white Southerners and deal in one case with Negro life in a Southern city, and in the other with the life of Mexicans, the Negro's counterpart in the Southwest. 6-14-45

Mr. Peeples' *Swing Low* is a story of human dignity in the midst of degradation. It takes its farm-bred Negro hero, Jimmy Mack, from his country origins through an intense year or so in the violent pre-war slums of Billiard Alley in Atlanta, and back to the farm. With sympathy for his characters, so full that it sometimes verges on the sentimental, Mr. Peeples gives us a sense of the monotonous, circumscribed lives of colored Georgians. He keeps his writing alive with clear, fresh observations of the conscious and unconscious evasions of the full impact of oppression on the oppressed. Humor, in marked contrast to the humorless intensity of Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, along with religious imagery and folksong choruses, enriches the simple and sensuous writing. Mr. Peeples' characters are alive; Willy Mack and Amy will not easily be forgotten. 6-19-45

The familiar *dramatis personae* of slum life—prostitutes, petty gangsters, bootleggers, murderers, the unspeakable representatives of the "Law"—are given new interest by their setting in a Negro-white context. Woven into this context is what seems to me the book's most important contribution—the potentiality of Negro-white unity. This is shown on at least two significant, if not highly developed, levels. A poor white family, even more destitute than the Macks, is befriended and helped by them, though the surrounding Negro community is so conditioned as to feel no reason for helping any whites. Elsewhere in the story another white, a small businessman, is aroused by injustice to Willy Mack and seeks help from the courts—the weary and frightened cynicism of the colored community notwithstanding.

Readers who expect political maturity or full programmatic solutions here will, however, be disappointed. It will be difficult for them to follow Willy Mack with any real sense of satisfaction when he walks out of the troubles of Billiard Alley and heads back for the farm. Indeed, this attempt to escape, in a historically backward direction, emphasizes a certain ambiguity in the other types of evasion and raises the question whether the author fully understands them as evasions of reality and is not, rather, exploiting them as literary material. One wonders, too, at such a very minor departure from accepted democratic practice as the omission in the text of the capital *N* in Negro. In the end we reluctantly conclude that the artistic imagination of Mr. Peeples has not yet fully bridged the racial gap; that he has not yet reached full faith in the real and potential stature of the Negro. He, like other white writers, has a complex and clinging burden to work free of in order to control the hitherto forbidden material to which they are increasingly attracted. However, it is vastly to Mr. Peeples' credit that he has thrown off so much. 6-19-45

# Book 'What The Negro Wants' Leaves Question Unanswered

Memphis - Commercial Appeal

WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS. Edited by Rayford W. Logan. University of North Carolina Press. $3.50.

Reviewed by MAJ. BELL IRVIN WILEY.

2-4-45

What does the negro want?

If the 18 essays making up this book are a fair gage of his desires, he wants complete equality with his white neighbor socially, politically, educationally and economically.

He wants to ride in the same railway coaches as whites, sleep in the same Pullmans, and eat in the same diners without having a curtain drawn between him and the other passengers. He wants to attend the same theaters and churches and sit where he chooses. He wants no color line drawn in hotels, taverns, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, beaches, swimming pools, and tourist camps. He wants no racial restrictions on voting. He wants no segregation in educational institutions. He wants to be addressed as "mister" like the white man. Finally, he wants no legal proscription of interracial marriage.

"There is no scientific reason why there should not be intermarriage between two human beings who happen to be of different race or color," says W. E. Dubois, negro social scientist educated at Harvard and Berlin. "Equality means the right to select one's own mates and close companions," he adds.

### Segregation Is Issue

The negro wants segregation in schools eliminated, says Charles H. Wesley, historian and Harvard Ph.D. recently made president of Wilberforce University, because "the segregated school is usually an inferior school and a disparity in the biracial system continues to develop." Others of the essayists point out that separate facilities in any category, whether school houses or seats in the ball park, mean less desirable accommodations for the colored folk.

Most of the essayists stress the point of America's racial pattern being inconsistent with her war aims as laid down in the Atlantic Charter. They contend that the place to effectuate Democracy is here, and the time, now.

Various means of achieving racial advancement are presented and discussed. 2-4-45

A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Pullman Porters, an American Federation of Labor affiliate, and leader of the famous March on Washington Movement, favors a nonviolent program consisting of negotiation, mass marches, picketing, boycott, trade union co-operation, and the building of a national, nonpartisan negro political bloc. He says flatly that "Communists must be excluded." Some of the other essayists take a position farther to the left. Most of them hold the opinion that Booker T. Washington erred in proclaiming that economic development should have priority over social relations. They incline rather to the view of W. E. Dubois that the economic factors cannot be disassociated from social and political considerations, and that "manly selfrespect is worth more than lands and houses."

### Liberals Taken To Task

Roy Wilkins, assistant secretary of Walter White's N. A. A. C. P., takes to task white liberals like John Temple Graves, Virginius Dabney and David Cohn who feel that the negro's greatest hope of bettering his status lies in his willingness to accept a program short of social equality. And Wilkins' views are shared by others. The essays in general set a pace that would appear to leave all but a handful of Southern whites far to the rear before the authors complete the first lap of the race.

W. T. Couch, director of the press which published the book, in a thoughtful and stimulating introduction, takes issue with the essayists in their insistence on abolition of all racial barriers.

"Does the white man have no right to attempt to separate cultural from biological integration and help the negro achieve the first and deny him the second?" he asks. "Booker T. Washington came nearer than anyone else to stating the problem of the negro in its true terms," he adds, and "nothing is more needed in the South today than rebirth of his ideas."

But even though Mr. Couch disagrees with some of the points of view expressed, he holds that the South and the country as a whole may profit from a full and frank statement of the negro's aspirations.

# BETWEEN THE LINES By Gordon B. Hancock

Daily world - Atlanta

### DESPERATIONISM AMONG NEGROES

Daily world - Atlanta

In my chapter in "What The Negro Wants," I touched lightly on a subject that needs more attention and that is desperationism among Negroes. The old saying, "the worm will turn", applies with great vigor to race relations in the United States and the world. The Jews, long known for their patience and endurance and suffering in many lands, have been kown to grow desperate and fight against dreadful odds even when extermination was the calculated price of such desperation. Human nature can only endure so much and beyond this it is dangerous to trust it in vexing situations.

4-22-45

Only sane leadership of Negroes has averted this desperationism in the past and only the most sagacious leadership can stave it off in the future, if in deed it can be really done. We always hold out the fearful consequences of such desperationism but desperate people can not always reason with the logic of a stall-fed leader with his head in some flowing trough. Unfortunately the "Negro leaders" seldom knows of race prejudice in the raw. They always come into contact with it in its mitigated strength and diluted forms. When intelligent whites meet intelligent Negroes ordinarily they have a high degree of respect and deference for their Negro associates be this association cultural or commercial.

### SEEING EYE TO EYE

It is very difficult then for the educated and cultured Negro to see eye to eye with the Negro farthest down who gets the full impact of race prejudice at its worst. It is correspondingly difficult for the Negro higher up to guage the thinking and feelings of the Negro farthest down and it is the Negro farthest down who is being drawn into a vortex of desperation. Whatever can be done to postpone or stave off this unhappy consummation should be done—and at once. But it is just as well for even the better class Negroes to understand that unless something is done to appease this lowliest Negro his desperationism is going to hurtle us into one of the worst catsatrophes we have known. This does not mean lecturing to these unhappy peoples about the "rights and wrongs" of the situation. It does not mean reading fine 'statements' and learned dissertations based upon "researches." It means getting in there and finding out "where hold destroyed Germany. hurts" the Negro farthest down.

This whole release is inspired by reports of an apologetic nature coming out of Italy concerning the 92nd division, our Negro contingent. Some weeks ago in one of my releases I referred to the question that had been raised as to the Negro's courage and bravery under fire. More recent dispatches are bearing more directly on this question. There are diverse reports on the morale of the Negro soldier. His friends say he is superb and his enemies consisting of fascists in Italy, Nazis in Germany and certain "Americans" are inclined to disparage the possibilities of the Negro soldier. Just as there are good reasons why he may falter at other times This column has contended from the first that valorous Negroes were super-patriots in that they were patriotic under worse handicaps than the other valorous men of our armed forces. 4-22-45

### REASON FOR RECORD

If the Negro of the 92nd division has not made the record expected there is a reason for it. The Negro soldier in Italy is demoralized, not cowardly; confused, not mutinous. We are expecting too much even of Negro soldiers to expect them to fight the Germans and certain Americans at the same time. Even super-patriots cannot measure up to such exalted and impossible specifications The Negro may be a super-patriot but he is not a superman. He is still human and can be so abused that his demoralization and confusion will break his morale.

My sympathy goes out to the Negro soldier for I have an inkling of the handicaps under which he must fight. That he fights at all is one of the wonders of the 20th century world. That he fights with distinction at times is easily one of the military miracles of modern times. But American must never forget that even the Negro's patriotism may be abused to the ing point, and this is fast developing.

It is with great concern that Negros are more and more raising the question, what are we fighting for In past wars he has taken things for granted and his patriotism has been taken for granted. That this is changing is reason for grave concern among the leadership of whites and Negroes. It is true that as a minority group the Negro can be crushed together with any of his desperational uprisings The Germans thought the same thing about the Jews. Be-

**WHAT THE NEGRO WANTS, edited by Rayford W. Logan. University of North Carolina Press. $3.50.** Mar. 1945 Survey Monthly

As CONTEMPLATED BY THE SPONSORING publishers, this collection of essays by fourteen leaders of Negro thought and action was to have been a spectrum-spread of contemporary racial opinion from social right to left and from academic blue to market-place brown (or red). In actuality, it turns out to be a striking and startling consensus of opinion, exhibiting what is almost a unanimity of minority feeling, expectations, and demands. Well-informed students are not surprised at this narrow margin between maximal and minimal wants, for they have known for a long time that such psychological closing of the minority ranks was in the making. Already pretty well consolidated, the thinking of American Negroes and, to some degree, that of the leaders of opinion in the non-white world, has been sharply focused by the effect of the war as it has thrown into ever sharper relief the moral commitments of democracy for the fair and just treatment of all minorities.

This is the central theme of the book, echoed in a dozen inflections with essentially the same import, and carried through with detailed variations and elaborations in the areas of political and civil rights, equality in educational and labor democracy, equality before the law, common access to the use of public facilities, equitable work conditions and opportunities, cultural participation and acceptance, freedom from social insult and caste status. It should be clear, so far as the evidence of this book goes, that what the Negro wants, in the apt words of Professor Logan, the editor, is "first-class citizenship." And most of the contributors would add: by right, not by concession, as a matter of justice even though out of increasing, critical expediency, and *now*. A few of the authors, recognizing the nature of social change, anticipate process development, but even they want program commitments not unstable concessions and substantial not token payments. Mar. 1945

Intelligent readers will inevitably take away the definite impression that, however divided the majority mind may be on the race question, the minority mind is practically unanimous, and is militantly toned and set. Nor is this merely minority bluff or bravado; these analysts, from the vantage point of minority insight into the dilemma of democracy, see clearly the ever-increasing self-contradictions in which, unless consistency of democratic practice and theory is realized, America will be nationally and internationally involved. Mar. 1945

This majority dilemma is itself well illustrated by the fact that instead of accepting this unanimity, obviously unplanned, on the part of such a diverse group of minority spokesmen and calling it to public attention, Mr. W. T. Couch, the publisher's editor, feels called upon to play the "devil's advocate" and register what he believes to be typical and weighty majority reservations and dissent. In doing this, Mr. Couch undermines the liberal tradition of his own progressive, constructive Press. He has the further temerity to challenge certain objective and generally accepted conclusions of Myrdal's "An American Dilemma," both on the subject of this fundamental moral inconsistency and on its verdict that segregation is an undesirable and increasingly unjust and troublesome expedient as a policy of race relations. Mr. Couch's position on these points rests on the undemocratic thesis that the majority is final judge of itself by virtue of its power position and is subject only to the benevolence of its own conscience or self-reform.

Besides presenting a doubtful theory of democracy, which has always been based on the principles of certain universal rights and the obligation to protect all individuals and thus any minority in such common rights, Mr. Couch has overlooked the fact that these rights are vested neither in the majority nor the minority as such, but in individuals, whether of the one or the other. Legal segregation, for example, as well as denying democracy to the Negro minority, infringes on the freedom of those majority persons who wish to exercise their right of free personal association. And so, the hypothesis of the "solid majority" breaks down from within. Indeed, this hypothesis is a pale substitute and a polite rationalization of the old traditional "solid South" sanction. Fortunately for the chances of change in our current practices of racial discrimination there is, even in the South, less and less of a psychologically solid "white majority" mind and policy. Many signs, like those of awakening labor and agrarian groups cutting across traditional race cleavages, promise pivotal reformings of older group alignments—in some cases breaking the old "majority" down by the creation of new majorities; in others, threatening it with an overbalancing coalition of minorities. 1945

In spite of this inauspicious publisher's send-off, the book is a timely and valuable guide for the general reader in the present critical turn of American race relations. The North Carolina Press, the editor, and the authors are to be congratulated upon a realistic, enlightening public service.

ALAIN LOCKE

*Professor of Philosophy*
*Howard University*

# "What The Negro Wants" Labeled 'Communistic'

Philadelphia Tribune

CHICAGO —(ANP) — The Chicago Tribune, called the nation's leading anti-Communistic newspaper, listed last week the book, "What The Negro Wants," as one of many Communistic books now in the Congressional Library. 7-14-45

The book containing articles by 14 writers including its editor, Dr. Rayford W. Logan, of Howard University, was one of 38 termed "communistic" in a total of 55 recommended for congressmen to read, according to the Tribune. 7-14-45

Twelve of the book's contributors, who include America's most outstanding Negro leaders, some of whom have been denounced in Communistic circles as anti-Red, are listed as pro-communists.

A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car porters and heretofore reported to be closely associated with socialist forces, is among those so listed.

11-1945

Winds of Fear

# Strange Fear

*The Winds of Fear, by Hodding Carter. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 278 pages. $2.50.*

New Republic 2-12-45

THE WINDS OF FEAR" is the best portrayal of the rising racial tension in the South that this reviewer has yet read. At a time when "Strange Fruit" is still selling at the rate of more than a thousand copies a week, it would be regrettable if Mr. Carter's compact and explosive narrative were to suffer to the extent that a public, having read the best-seller, would pass it by completely. There is no place in this review for serious comparison of the two; actually together they form a tight whole, and to read one without the other is to find that you have missed some of the pieces that dovetail into a complete picture. For where Lillian Smith was exploring the past, Hodding Carter is writing as an eye witness of a period when race relationships in the South are at a very low ebb.

It would seem unfair, then, to review his book merely as a novel, for it has implications which are the grave concern of us all. In this country we have a race problem which is older than any living man or woman and I am sure that Carter wrote his book, not because he saw in this the elements of an exciting novel but because he was sorely troubled by what is happening in the South. That the novel form seemed best suited to present these feelings might almost be said to be coincidental, and, writing in anger and some bitterness, what he has to say is far more important than how he may say it. 2-12-45

The main fear of the title is, of course, the fear of race, something which anyone who is not a Southerner may find hard to understand. It is like a small boy who has somehow managed to catch a wildcat by the tail but having accomplished this, finds himself in a much worse position. He would like to let go but is afraid to; the tail is short and slippery and he realizes all at once that he never should have tackled it, yet he can only hang on grimly and stall for time. The white folks of Lillian Smith's Maxwell, Georgia, were in that position twenty-five years ago and we find the situation unchanged in the present-day Carvel City, Mississippi, about which Hodding Carter is writing. The white man is sick of the fight and would like to turn the Negro loose, but after a lifetime of grinding his face in the dirt, is afraid of the consequences. To his fear has been added guilt, and to justify both he can only cling to the worn-out legend about the Negro. 2-12-45

When war came to the South it accentuated the problem of race. Whites felt that Negroes were getting uppity and only strong measures could force them back into the old pattern. Negroes, on the other hand, had made some gains and they meant to keep them, especially the younger ones who no longer have faith in gradual processes and close coöperation with the better white folks. There is a growing militancy afoot which not only fans the winds of fear for the white Southerner, but bothers some Negroes as well. What happens when a backwater Negrophobe and reformed drunkard is made town marshal in order to apply those strong measures takes up the major part of Carter's book.

Cancy Dodd is neither new to the South nor to its literature, he is the man who cut off the dog's tail in "Kneel to the Rising Sun," and in that one short story Caldwell created something which became a symbol. Cancy's only way was the way of violence, and it could only lead to violence in return. The fight that Kirk Marby, editor of the town paper, Alan, his son, recently home from the South Pacific minus an arm, and Henry Boling, the town liberal, wage against Cancy and what he stands for is the drama with which Mr. Carter deals. The pattern is not an unfamiliar one, but it is handled with honesty, courage and conviction. 2-12-45

Within these confines there is little with which anyone could find fault. If there is a doubt in the reader's mind, it is likely to be one that was in mine. I am sure Mr. Carter will agree that the overthrowing of a symbol, Cancy Dodd, is no solution but merely a temporary postponement of another series of crises in the same general pattern. But the important thing is that here is another Southerner deeply troubled by the lot of the Negro in his native land and one who tackles its solution in a positive manner. This in itself, though not enough, is none the less encouraging.

I expect that what I am trying to say is that "The Winds of Fear" is not the novel about the South for which so many of us have been waiting. This is in no way to be taken as a slap at Hodding Carter, for the same thing can be said of "Strange Fruit." It may even be that such a book will never be written. But if it is, I have a feeling that it must go beyond the two novels I have just mentioned, both in solution and in the illumination of the Negro in the South. He is not the bumbling and well meaning symbol of the safe Negro, Professor Moorehouse, nor is he the neurotic and slightly hysterical Dr. Stanley, the symbol Mr. Carter has chosen to represent the Negro born in the North.

BUCKLIN MOON

13-1945 Credit Unions

## 12,533 Members Enrolled

# Negro Credit Unions Supply Million in Loans to Members

The Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

MADISON, Wisc.—The record of Negro credit unions chartered by the Federal Government compares very favorably with that of all Federally chartered credit unions, according to a report just issued by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Of the ninety-one Negro groups organized since the Federal Credit Union Act was passed in 1934, 81 per cent (74) were in operation on December 31, 1944, while only 74 per cent (3,817) of all 5,157 Federal credit unions organized since 1934 were in operation at the end of 1944. During 1943 and 1944 the number of Negro credit unions rose from seventy ty-two to seventy-four, while the number of all Federal credit unions fell from 4,145 to 3,815. 11-10-45

**HIGHER MEMBERSHIP**

The Negro groups have 34 per cent of their potential memberships, as compared with 33 per cent for all groups. They have a total of 12,533 members, who have deposited $642,716 of their savings in their credit union share accounts. The average savings per member is $51.

These savings have been used to provide credit union members loans for "provident or productive purposes" amounting to $1,723.451. Of these only $1,560 have been charged off because of bad loans. This is .09 per cent of all loans granted, or nine cents per $100. After charging off this amount, however, they still have over $20,000 in reserves for bad loans which they have set aside out of profits. 11-10-45

**IN MIXED UNIONS**

In addition to the Negroes served by their special credit unions covered by this survey, many Negroes are served by credit unions organized to serve both Negroes and others. Feredal credit unions represent less than half of all credit unions in the United States. The others are chartered by their respective State governments.

Credit unions are savings and loan associations organized and operated by and for the people they serve. The members, who must have some common bond of occupation, association or residence, encourage each other to build by their savings in a common pool of funds which are then used to provide the members loans at low rates of interest. The credit unions are operated by the members themselves through a board of directors they elect. 11-10-45

**FIGHT LOAN SHARKS**

This people's movement was originated to combat the evils of the loan shark and the high-rate money lender, and to enable the individual to help himself use his money more effectively. Before the war it was expanding rapidly throughout the world, although particularly in Canada and the United States.

Groups wishing additional information about these organizations should write the Credit Union National Association, Madison 1, Wisconsin.